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REMARKS
ON
THE CONDUCT
OF
OPPOSITION
DURING
THE PRESENT PARLIAMENT,
BY
GEOFFREY MOWBRAY, ESQ.

Καὶ ὡς ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι ἕτεροι γε λόγοι παρέρηκασι πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ψευδὲς καὶ πολλὰ τὴν πολιτείαν ἐλαττοντες· οἷον ἐν τοῖς δικαστηρίοις ὑμῶν εἴη ἡ σωτηρία, καὶ διὰ τὴν ψῆφον τὴν πολιτείαν ὑμᾶς φυλάττειν. Ἐγὼ δὲ οἶδα, ὅτι τὰ ταῦτα μὲν ὑμῖν, τὰ δικαστήρια τῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλους δικαίων εἰς κοινὰ. Ἐν δὲ τοῖς σπυλοῖς δὲ κρατεῖν τῶν ἐχθρῶν, καὶ διὰ τούτων εἶναι ἡ σωτηρία τῆς πολιτείας.

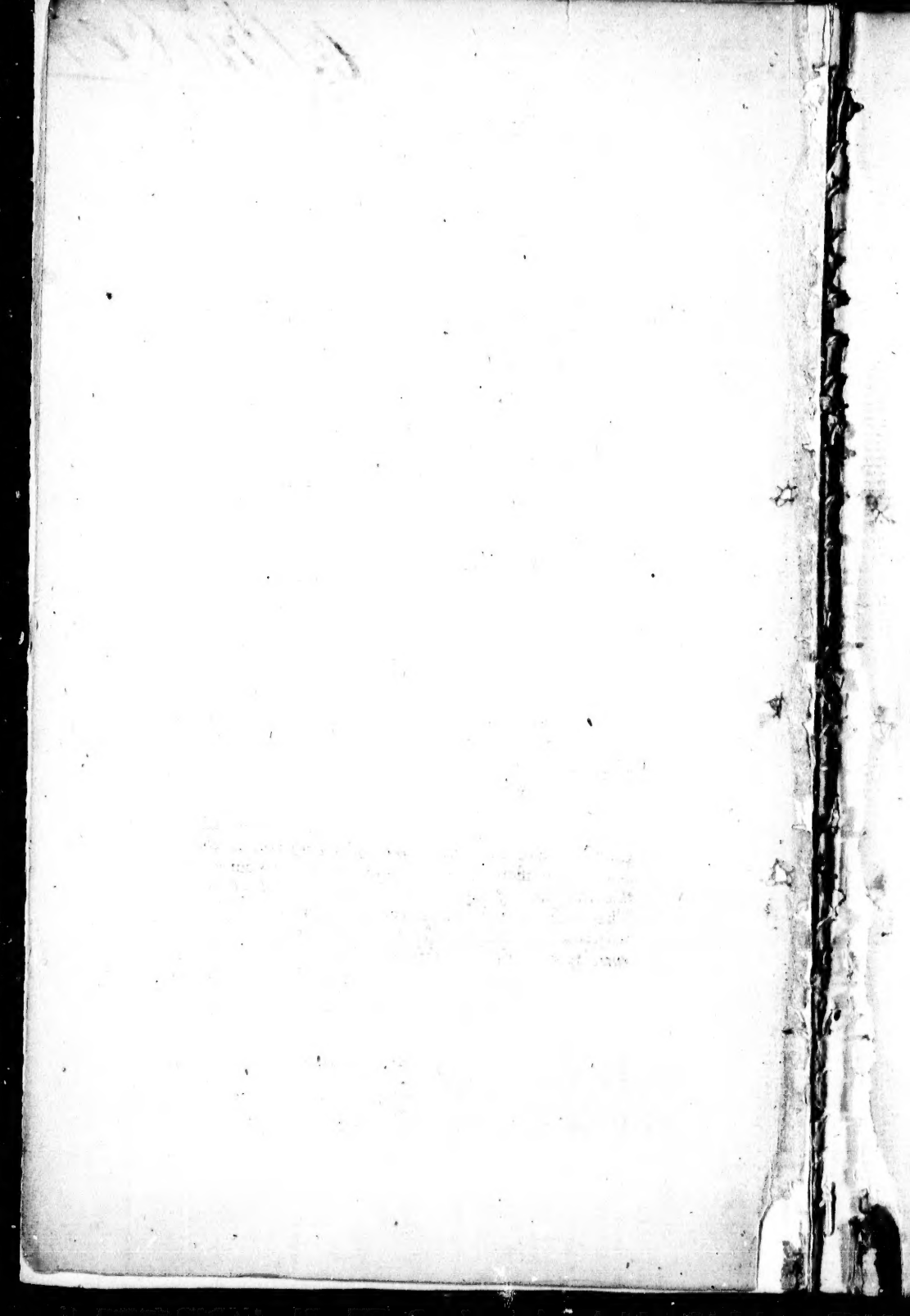
But, O my fellow-citizens, a new and different language hath poured in upon you; *false, and highly dangerous to the community.* Such is that assertion, that in your tribunals is your great security; *that your right of suffrage is the real bulwark of the constitution.* That these tribunals are our common resource, in all private contests, I acknowledge. *But it is by arms we are to subdue our enemies, by arms we are to defend the state.*

Demosth. Orat. de Repub. Ordinan.

LONDON:

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1798.



REMARKS,

&c.

My dear Friend,

AMONG the remarkable events of this productive period, few are more singular than the retreat of the New Whigs from their station in Parliament.

The reasons assigned for this secession are, at least, original. They do not console us with hopes, that the vessel of the state is left to pursue her course under more able guidance. They do not urge past labours in exemption of future fatigue; they do not entreat a condonation of their services in mercy to a frail constitution, worn down, past cure, by the anxious discharge of public duties. Their justification

is far, very far different. They are eager to proclaim and magnify our perilous situation. They paint with all the strong colours of rhetoric, those miseries in which their country is shrouded and enveloped. Defeat and disgrace abroad—corruption and discontent at home—an abandoned ministry—an inefficient legislature—Ireland forced into acts of Rebellion by a tyrannous government—Great Britain bankrupt in resources, undone with taxes, yet supinely tolerant of a cabinet, in whose hands neither victory nor supplication can procure the blessings of peace.

Such is the matter of that melancholy dirge, which opposition sung as it calmly arrayed the ceremonies of its own dissolution. Having chanted these funereal notes, it voluntarily lies down to die, in hopes, that Phoenix-like, a new and more glorious bird will spread his purple wings to the sun, as he rises from the ashes of the self-devoted parent.

This event was announced to the country during the last session, while a motion for a Reform in Parliament was under debate. They declared that our representative system is effete, rotten, and inadequate to the functions of a free government; that the sentiments of the country have no weight in the Commons House of Parliament;

Parliament ; all constitutional controul is sunk, and swallowed up in ministerial influence. The measures of a profligate administration are voted in a mood of rash and unmerited confidence, while the salutary counsels of upright statesmen are rejected with disdain.

I know, my dear Sir, that you will agree with me, that this is a false, and wicked account of our internal government : you have already said that it is an uncommon step taken by the party at a very uncommon period.

The tyrants of France have refused us peace. Envious of our prosperity they have planned an invasion of the empire. They have proclaimed it as their fixed design to overturn our constitution, to wrest from us the dominion of the seas, to annihilate our commerce, to riot in the plunder of a peaceful country, and an industrious people. Republican armies already look to a division of our spoils. Their republican rulers already count upon the triumphs of conquest, and audaciously hypothecate our wealth in payment of those loans which they make to subdue us.

These are the genuine sources of our present danger. It is the boundless ambition and animosity of France, the general and infatuated blindness of Europe,

Europe, and the restless spirit of a republican faction among us, which render our situation truly critical. But even if we could add to these calamities the much greater misfortune of a corrupt and inefficient government at home, upon what principle is it that the accumulated wretchedness of the country is to justify the New Whigs in seceding from their parliamentary duties? It may be venial to indulge in the mild and stable pleasures of secluded life, during a season of public tranquillity. But when the safety of the commonwealth is placed in doubt and hazard, a patriot statesman is left without alternative or choice. He is summoned by an imperious duty to the awful, but grateful task of administering relief to her wants, of appeasing her troubles, and healing her wounds. The heart of an honest man grapples to his country with a tenacity proportioned to her danger. He has no time, no affections, no passions, no powers of body, no energies of mind, which he does not consecrate to her defence and rescue. He cannot, like the new Whigs, retire to sleep in peace, lulled by the storm which bursts upon his country, and desolates Europe. He is not betrayed into indolence by hopes, but he is utterly incapable of despair. Discomfited, disgraced, baffled, disappointed, ejected from the very bosom of his country, still the divine impulse will not suffer him to rest. His resources, his plans, his exertions, his enterprizes
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are inexhaustible, and his labours find no other period than the termination of his life.

But that love of our country, which, according to ancient ethics, comprehended all the virtues and endearments of humanity, is unfelt by the New Whigs. They retire from Parliament, during a period of national distress, and assign reasons for their conduct, of the most pernicious tendency. Their apology (if it will submit to such an humble name) is a direct and open declaration to the country, that we are without an effective and lawful government, at this perilous juncture. It is nothing less than a public exhortation to the people to reassume the reins of government. If the state of our representation justifies those who are chosen into Parliament, in deserting their station, the electors of Great Britain ought not to make any return. The constituents cannot authorise acts, which the representative cannot in conscience perform. The "imposture" ought not to continue, and the whole body of the people should rise up as one mass, and wrest the powers of the third estate from those who have usurped its functions*.

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Language

* This is the very language of a speech made in the Whig Club, 5th December, 1797, as given in the Morning Chronicle. It is there said, that to attend Parliament, is "to hold out false hopes to the country; that it is abetting imposture, and only approving things

Language and conduct like this is always pregnant with anarchy and ruin. But the danger is more imminent, because the New Whigs plough in the same furrow, and deepen the very line of distinction, which France now draws between the government and people of these kingdoms, for the utter destruction of both. Nothing can purge a party acting thus, from the charge of rash and injurious violence. The secession deserves a much worse appellation, unless the motives which gave rise to it are unquestionably pure, and the reasons upon which it is founded are, to appearance at least, convincing and solid.

Let us examine both.

Our representative system has undergone but little change since the revolution. Every partial alteration which has taken place in particular boroughs, has contributed to extend the privilege of voting more widely. For the last twenty years, the present leader of the New Whigs has been at the head of a party in systematic opposition to each succeeding cabinet. No one administration, no one parliament, no one measure, has

things radically wrong." It is farther declared, that the orator is "ready to act as soon as the people are unwilling to suffer this delusion." This is not the speech of a wild democratic baronet, but of the head of the party.

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escaped his unqualified censure. He unceasingly denounced the influence of the crown, the weakness of ministers, and the corrupt servility of parliament. Those who read his invectives against Lord North and his majorities, and compare them with his more recent speeches, may find some change in his political sentiments, but they will meet with none in the warmth of his personal philippics. The counsels of Mr. Fox, and of a much larger opposition than the present, were rejected as uniformly in those times *, as during the last session. Yet neither Mr. Fox, nor any other member, retired then from his duty, because he could not effect a reform in parliament. So far as any thing can be inferred from the conduct of Mr. Fox, during that period, it was more in praise than in condemnation of our representative system as it now stands. He admitted its imperfections, by supporting the general principle of reform; but he gave it a most effectual support, by disapproving of every specific plan proposed to supersede it. It is utterly impossible, then, that he could have considered our representation as inadequate to the ends of government, during the best and most vigorous period of his political life, since he could neither devise nor select a system to adopt in its place.

* These remarks are, of course, confined to the period of Mr. Fox's being in opposition.

To what recent event, therefore, are we to attribute it, that while the shape and form of our representation remains unchanged, Mr. Fox has changed his opinions? It would be injustice to that gentleman to suppose, that he had formed his present resolution at the close of the last Parliament, much as he declaimed against its wicked acts, and unconstitutional opinions. If he had done so, he was bound to have disclosed to his constituents the unusual terms upon which he meant to accept of his seat. It was the manifest duty of every one of the New Whigs to have done the same *. If they had determined to secede prior to the general election, they have deceived the electors by whom they were returned. If they have embraced the resolution since that

* It would be difficult to justify them now for not resigning their seats, since they have stubbornly resolved to neglect their duty. It seems, however, that they construe the silence of their constituents into an approbation of their conduct. I question the right of the electors to give this leave upon any constitutional principle. But if we admit thus much to opposition, they must, in return, admit, that the general silence of the country gives a like sanction to the usual measures of Government. The situation of Mr. Fox is still more awkward and whimsical than that of his coadjutors. He says, that his constituents desired his attendance to oppose the assessed taxes. Since they command him to oppose a measure which they disapprove, it may be fairly urged, that when they acquiesce in his absence, they condemn his opposition. Into such absurdities will men of the greatest talents fall, when they deviate from the plain onward track of life.

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time, they have done so at a most suspicious season. The parliamentary measures of the last session were much fewer in number and less important in their nature, than those of the foregoing. But, during the spring, a few panic-struck, and some disappointed gentlemen wished to place a respectable nobleman at the head of a new administration. The stipulated basis of this arrangement was, the exclusion of Mr. Fox from power; and Mr. Sheridan was too wise to desert him, for the cold hope of employment under a ministry much too feeble to last*. The scheme was silly; but though a mere bubble, short-lived and empty, it shewed, as it played upon the surface, how strong the current of opinion ran against the New Whigs.

Since the above was written, a letter has appeared in the public prints, giving an account of this transaction, and signed with the name of the noble Earl alluded to. The narrative shews that coquetry is not confined to the lovelier sex. It is impossible not to smile at

———"The conscience of his worth,
That would be woo'd, and not unsought be won;
Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retir'd."

The animadversions upon the Duke of Portland's conduct, and the panegyric upon Mr. Fox, might call for some remark; but I would not unnecessarily offend the feelings of a gallant soldier, and a most liberal and accomplished gentleman. The letter from Mr. Fox, which is subjoined, is a model for those to copy, who would seem to answer, and yet wish to say nothing.

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Was it the cackling of these few poor geese which alarmed our politicians for the safety of their country, as it destroyed their delusive dreams of place and emolument? Certain it is, that the plan of reform was introduced soon after this change was proposed, and the resolution was then taken to secede from Parliament if it failed of success.

But let the motives of the secession be what they may, a defect in the cause of representation could form no ground to justify it. The very circumstance upon which the opposition urged the necessity of the measure, fails them in point of fact. It is not true that the present House of Commons do not speak the sentiments of the Country—I say this with the means of proof at hand—There never was a time in which the conduct of the legislature was more fully and heartily approved by the great body of the people. I will not resort to that silence which the opposition interpret into an unequivocal approbation from their immediate constituents. They have given us a more decisive test of the popularity of Parliament in their eagerness to obtain addresses for the removal of his Majesty's Ministers. In most counties they did not venture to call a meeting of the people, as being well assured that the measure would be negatived. In many where
they

they did hazard the attempt, they were outnumbered and obliged to retire.

Let us suppose, however, that the sentiments of the people are at variance with those of their representatives, and that nothing can restore their salutary influence upon the measures of government but a reform in Parliament. Still I should contend upon Mr. Fox's own concessions in the debate upon that measure, that Mr. Gray's plan was utterly unfit to remove the mischief which it proposed to remedy. Its leading principle was to reduce the several modes of representation which exist under the present constitution, to one nearly similar to that which obtains in counties at present. Now, it was declared by Mr. Fox, that the body of the people are averse from the war; but the same gentleman admitted, that this inclination for peace had made no change in the members returned by the different counties to Parliament at the last election*. If, then, the great body of country gentlemen who are chosen upon a similar plan to that which is proposed by Mr. Gray, adhere to the ministry in contradiction to the people's wishes, from whence is it collected, that an extension of the

* The state of representation in Westminster, Norwich, Bristol, &c. bears a more near resemblance to the reform proposed. But Mr. Fox's remark applies as directly to them as to the Counties.

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very same mode of election, would give a different tone to the opinions and measures of the House.

Neither will I ask you, my dear Sir, to set bounds to your concessions here. Let us assume for a moment that this scheme would effect all that it purposed to accomplish. Let us grant that it contains every possible blessing which an upright and able statesman can devise for the empire. Still the House of Commons reject it. Is a Member of Parliament to neglect the interests of his country altogether, because he cannot pay her every possible service? It is the boast of Mr. Fox, that he opposed our war with the Colonies, and that his labours were finally crowned with success. Whether the part which he took in that unhappy business furnishes an honest source for exultation, is a question which history must solve. But if the opposition of Mr. Fox was of such service in the war with America, why should he refuse it in the contest with France?

The praise of rectifying the Ministers financial mistakes is claimed by Mr. Sheridan. If he has done this, the glory devolved on him, but the advantage redounded to his country. It may seem a poor and vulgar blessing in contrast with the imperial gift of a regenerate constitution. But
still

Still it is a blessing, and upon what principle are we called upon to make a lumping bargain, and told that if one is above our price, we shall not be permitted to acquire the other? If the mistakes of administration were to fall on ministers alone, they might be left to reap the fruits of their own folly. But the errors of government are misfortunes to the people. It is the duty of our constitutional guardians utterly to avert, where they can, all measures injurious to our prosperity: but an unsuccessful struggle to do so, does not dispense with what is not less their duty; to correct and soften those mischiefs which they find it impossible to remove altogether. They are retainers of the people, pledged and sworn to watch over their interests both day and night. While they continue upon the honourable post, nothing can exempt them from the fatigues of duty. When they are once chosen into the Commons House of Parliament, they are representatives, not of a particular district, but of the whole British people; and it is beyond the power of a borough, or county, to dispense with service that is due to the nation at large *.

* It is obvious that if such a power does exist, it is bottomed on the principle, that Members of Parliament are bound to obey their Constituents. Yet Mr. Fox, in the very speech in which he declared his intention to secede, controverts that opinion. His words are—"It has often been a question both within and without these walls, how far representatives ought to be bound by the instructions of their constituents. It is a question upon which
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If the imperfection of the House of Commons could form an excuse for the absence of its members, still what are we to do with those noblemen who desert their duty in the House of Peers? We have not heard, at least, hitherto, that some insane, or school-boy lord, has devised a reform in that august assembly. It is not yet proposed to purify the House by decimation, or to tear from the crown its prerogative of calling individuals of merit, and of fortune, up to its hereditary council. Flimsy, and patched up, as this vindication is, it leaves the opposition Peers to stand shivering before their country, bare, naked, and destitute of all apology. If they can be of any use to their country, it is not the constitution of the House in which they ought to serve it that can prevent them. The reasons of their conduct, (if they have any,) are at least distinct from, if not contradictory to those alledged in the House of Commons. Decency forbids me to conjecture, that they have with the zeal of new converts, outstripped their associates, and as the New Whig Commoners, by their secession, pronounce the House of Commons to be an useless incumbrance in its present state, so the New Whig Peers by a similar step, signify their opinion that

“ my mind is not altogether made up, although I own I lean to the
 “ opinion that having to legislate for the empire, they ought not to
 “ be altogether guided by instructions that may be dictated by local
 “ interests.” Woodfall's Parl. Rep. of last Session, Vol. III. p. 329.

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the House of Lords is a senseless institution, which nothing can render productive of advantage to the country.

Such, my dear Sir, is the famous justification of this extraordinary proceeding. Its absurdities are easily fum'd up. It insists upon applying a remedy to an evil which does not exist. The remedy it suggests would be too feeble to remove the malady if it was really felt. If the assertions of the New Whigs were allowed as facts, they would form no justification for their conduct, and if their justification were valid, it would extend only to half their party.

If the New Whigs had been sincere in their escape from public business, it would be useless to expose the weakness and incongruity of their reasons. I should scorn to hunt pusillanimity down to its obscure retreat. Condemning the professed motives of their secession, the public would applaud its effects, and admire the inscrutable ways of Providence, which works good to its creatures from mean and foolish instruments. The people left to their own virtuous impulse, would cease to be the victims of delusive hopes and injurious suspicions. They would prepare to meet their ancient and implacable enemy with their ancient unanimity and courage. They would deem no sacrifice of wealth, of comfort,

or

or of labour, too great in support of those honourable objects of living, which are infinitely more precious than life itself. These cheering consequences would result to the people without doors from the secession of the party, if it were really to take place. They have given it as their own opinion, that their attendance in parliament is of no service to the country.

But you, my dear Sir, are well aware that the New Whigs entertain designs far different from what they profess. The leaders of opposition are restless and turbulent spirits, equally impatient of obscurity and repose. Pinioned down in the Earth's centre, they would struggle to regain the political station they had left; though sin, and death, and all the plagues of hell, should follow at their heels. They talk of flight while they plant an ambuscade. They will not appear in the constitutional councils of the country to superintend the general business of the state. But if a particular measure is disrelished by the people, however conducive to the real interests of the state, they are eager to grasp at injurious popularity, by coming down to oppose it*.

* I cannot forbear quoting the opinion of one, who, was if possible, more of a patriot and statesman than an orator, upon conduct like this.

Εσι γάρ, ἔστιν ἡσυχία δικαία καὶ συμφέρουσα τῇ πόλει,
ἢν οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν πολιτῶν ὑμᾶς ἀπλῶς ἀγέτε. ΑΛΛ' οὐ
ταύτην

In the Whig Club, also, they are as active, as virulent, and as malignant as ever. They distort the public situation in false and virulent harangues. They cheer their little men with invectives against the ministry, and mis-statements of our political interests; and all that they advance passes unrefuted into general circulation, through the medium of their party newspapers.

ταύτην οὗτος ἄγα τὴν ἡσυχίαν, πολλὰ γε καὶ δᾶ' ἀλλ' ἀποσᾶς, ὅταν αὐτῷ δόξη, τῆς πολιτείας (πολλάκις δὲ δοκῇ) φυλάτε ὀπηνίκα ἐς ἐμεσοὶ τῷ συνεχῶς λέγοντι, ἢ παρὰ τῆς τύχης τί συμβέβηκεν ἐναντιώμα, ἢ ἄλλο τι δύσκολον γέγονε· (πολλὰ δὲ τὰ ἀνθρωπικὰ) ἅτ' ἐπὶ τούτῳ τῷ καιρῷ ξήτωρ, ἐξαίφνης ἐκ τῆς ἡσυχίας, ὥσπερ πνεῦμα, ἐφάνη, καὶ πεφωναστικῶς καὶ, συναλεχῶς ῥήματα καὶ λόγους, συνέιρε τρεῖς σαφῶς, καὶ απνευστί, ὄντισιν μὲν οὐδεμίαν φεροντας, ἐδ' ἀγαθὸς κτήσιν οὐδεν, συμφορὰν δὲ τῷ τυγχόντι τῶν πολιτῶν, καὶ κοινὴν αἰσχυρὴν.

For there is, yes, there is a state of retirement, honest and advantageous to the state. Many of you, my countrymen, enjoy it in artless integrity. But his retirement is not of this kind. Far from it! He frequently retires at his pleasure from the public service, and watches until you grow tired of some constant speaker, until fortune has traversed your designs or involved you in some of those various calamities incident to humanity. Instantly the Orator rushes, like a tempest, from his retreat: his voice is already exercised—his words and periods are prepared—he delivers them with breathless vehemence and volubility, but to no useful purpose; with no effect of any real importance. They involve his fellow-citizens in distress, and are a disgrace to his country.

Demosthenes Orat. de Corona.

The object of that association was reprehensible in its first institution. It was a party instrument planned and erected for the sole purpose of forcing a change of Ministers from the Crown by factious clamour. I do not deny that it originally contained many persons of cultivated mind and respectable character. Some of their names may be found still lingering on the club roll. You will not suppose that I include, in this description, the few persons of rank and fortune who hold the hammer at the Crown and Anchor, and fulfil the utmost limit of their talents when they regulate the bottle ceremonies of a drunken meeting. Persons of this description are a sort of Political Sumpter Mule, who bear the expences of a party, when they are out of power, and carry the ornamental equipage and gala-furniture of Government, with grave and stately dulness, when they are led into place. But if we must exclude them from the first rank, we ought not to confound them with the general rubbish materials of the club.

These last are an ill-forted gang, such as are readily picked up in a large and corrupted city; a mob of writers for public prints; of politicians without knowledge; of lawyers without business; of men of fashion without fortune; and of tradesmen without employment. Most of them in the jaws of bankruptcy and ruin. All
of

of them at war with the wholesome restraints and sober demeanour of a well-ordered government. Men who turn the restlessness of their own minds, and the melancholy consequences of their own faults, into a charge of high misdemeanour, and crime against the ministry; whose discontents do not arise from any general grievance, but, have their source in a want of industry to encrease their means to the capacious size of their appetites; or of fortitude to reduce their appetites within the narrow compass of their means.

What are we to think of those candidates for the government of a great and virtuous people, who foment and cherish, and consort with such a rabble-rout? In mercy to the opposition leaders, we may hope that their hearts and designs are not in unison with those of their company; we may suppose that this club is nothing more than the humble rags in which they are clad during the period of distress, and which they would hasten to shake off in more proud and prosperous days. Still what are we to conclude from their conduct in those meetings which they hold? The wisdom and manly port of Ulysses must beam from beneath the sordid covering of his disguise; but what traces of the patriot hero are manifest in the conduct of the New Whig party? Is it decent or fitting for a grave and honest states-

man to hold his councils amidst the clangor of glasses, and the loud huzzas of a tumultuous and drunken meeting? Is he to intermingle his anxious cares, his sober enquiries, his comprehensive plans for the public weal with ambiguous toasts, with obscene jests, with low buffoonery, with lascivious songs, and with the riotous acclamations of his wine-struck companions?

An appropriate toast gives his cue to Mr. Fox, for an harangue upon the ruinous prospects of the country. In the alternate order of the exhibition, the assembly are consoled with the melodious vociferations of Mr. Incledon. The evocative of some yelping reformer starts Mr. Sheridan from his chair. The room re-echos with denunciations of impeachment, and the audience kindle with resentment at the encrease of influence, and the creation of peers. Soon "listening envy drops her snakes" at the warbled incantations of Mr. Dignum. Such is the bill of entertainment in this mongrel shew of revelry and care, where orators and song-men, patriots and players, severally display their powers, and labour for the plaudits of their audience in the successive shiftings of the various scenes.

Indeed, my dear Sir, I take no pleasure in the picture I have drawn; it is a melancholy, a very melancholy augury for the country, when men of talents conceive that they can struggle into power, by means like these.

I shall

I shall always be very slow to impute a deliberate design of overturning the constitution to those gentlemen who are supposed to direct the proceedings of the New Whigs. But what is any man to conclude from their conduct in parliament, and in this club, if he has no other means to ascertain their intentions? Are not the French Directory, who greedily attend to our opposition prints while they arbitrarily suppress their own, invited by these arts to consider the conquest of this country as feasible by those means which they have employed with success against the rest of Europe? May they not fairly infer from such proceedings the propagation of their principles among us, and count upon the Whig Club, as a provisional government already formed to supersede the legislature? The New Whigs applauded the revolution of France under all its mutations. They have defended her moderation and sincerity, in all her transactions. They have laboured to humble the high spirit of this country, and to reconcile us to conditions of peace the most degrading and injurious. They represent the republic, (and God knows how falsely they do it) as flourishing under a free government, while they describe Great Britain, as reduced to a state of slavery, in which resistance to the executive power is resolved into a mere matter of prudence. They extol the vigor of the French representative system, and

they decry our own. as a decayed and useleſs incumbrance. Finally, as if to accelerate that ruin of the conſtitution, which they denounce, in imitation of the firſt anarchists in France, they form a political club, who aſſemble to deceive the people, and to controul the legiſlature.

The miſchief of this conduct, does not lie in mere poſſibility and ſuppoſition. It has quickened a monſter into life, which may coſt this country much pain and blood to deſtroy. The dictators of France count upon our internal diviſions as means ready formed to ſubdue us. They erect their hopes of ſucceſs upon the diſaffection of ſome of us, and the indifference and cowardice of the reſt. Hence it is, and I ſay it with indignant ſhame, that the manifeſto to their Army of England is nothing more than a brief and unexaggerated abſtract of a ſpeech made to the Whig Club during the laſt ſummer.

There may be ſome who condemn the conduct of oppoſition for deſerting their ſeats in parliament, and transferring their place of ſitting to the Whig Club, and yet they may approve of thoſe meaſures which they recommend to the country.

This is a poſition well worthy of diſcuſſion. The people of Great Britain ought to liſten to
good

good advice from whatever quarter it may come. I will, therefore, with your leave, examine those three great points which remain at issue between Ministers and Opposition; these are the conduct to be observed towards Ireland, the subject of Peace, and the present system of Taxation.

I have condemned the practices of opposition in the Sister Country, at a time when I did not usually question the propriety of their measures. I was of opinion, that they laboured with unusual diligence to strike the roots of their party deep and wide, throughout that kingdom, and used every artifice to seduce her into a dangerous union with a minority in the English legislature. The design has been avowed by Mr. Fox, in his speech upon the state of Ireland, during the last session *. But its completion would be ruinous to the prosperity and mutual attachment of those two great and essential members of the empire. If the interference of Ireland should materially affect the situation of domestic parties in Great

* His words, as taken in Woodfall's report of the debates of last session, Vol. II. p. 519 are, "This discussion (of the state of Ireland) may be attended with beneficial consequences, because it will shew the people of Ireland, that it is not the French alone to whom they may look for a redress of their grievances, that there is at least a portion of the British House of Commons, who feel for them under oppression, and who are desirous to administer to their relief."

Britain, the independence of the latter would be utterly destroyed, since her legislature would be influenced by opinions distinct from those of the people whom they represent. If, on the other hand, as is more probable, the weight of Ireland could work no change upon the internal government of Great Britain, the attempt would nourish all that animosity which strong passions engender from disappointed hopes, and the reciprocal affections of the countries would be gradually weakened, and finally destroyed. Those who consider what took place upon the regency, and the efforts which were made by opposition at that time, will not look upon these reflections as either improbable or unfounded.

The objections, which have been taken to the present system respecting Ireland, are the non-emancipation of the Catholics, as it is called; the adoption of an oppressive and military system, in ruling the inhabitants; and a vigorous opposition to a reform of their Parliament.

The real state of that country is but little understood by the great body of the British people. I shall endeavour to explain it from sources not less authentic than those of that noble Earl, who has lately rendered the situation of his native country the subject of parliamentary discussion.

sion. To do this with effect, I must take up matters a little farther back than the present period.

The Irish people are divided by religious tenets into three sects: the Protestants, properly so called; the Presbyterians, or (as it is more fashionable to denominate them) the Protestant Dissenters; and the Roman Catholics. For more than a century past, the great mass of freehold property in the kingdom has been vested in the former. They have been solely entrusted with the principal functions and offices of government, and have been considered as the great bond of union between that country and Great Britain.

The Protestant Dissenters obtained their chief settlements in Ireland, during the reign of the first James, and the period of Cromwell's usurpation. The northern counties, in which they particularly dwell, not being so fruitful as the remaining parts of Ireland, they have turned their attention to manufacture, and have cultivated the linen trade with great success. If I am rightly informed, England imports and pays for a greater quantity of their manufacture, than the total amount, in value, of all her exports to that kingdom. This part of the country, therefore, derives a more direct and palpable advantage,
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from the union with Great Britain, than the rest of the island.

Ever since the reformation, the political maxims of all European nations have been influenced by their religious tenets. This principle has prevailed particularly in Ireland, from a concurrence of various circumstances. It has given rise to an alliance between the protestant and dissenting interests there, in opposition to the Catholics. They considered these last as a common and outnumbering enemy, from whose opinions, both religious and civil, they had more to dread than from their own private disagreements.

The restraints upon the Irish Dissenters, therefore, were never excessive, and during the present reign they have been wholly removed. They are now upon the same footing, in respect to civil rights, with the members of the established church. There are no constitutional grievances of which they can complain, unless the payment of tithes, and a reform in Parliament are to be accounted as such. The very war, which has brought inevitable distress upon some parts of the empire, might have been rendered a source of opulence to them. Having raged so widely throughout Germany, it annihilated the linen manufactures of that country, and opened new and extensive marts to Irish industry.

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The third left are, the Roman Catholics. They are spread over the remaining provinces of Ireland, and are descended from the ancient inhabitants of that country, and from the first English settlers who arrived among them.

For these two centuries, until the present reign, these poor people were blessed only as Issachar was blessed. They were considered as mere slaves and victims, turned out to labour, or used in sacrifice as public convenience required, or prejudice prompted. No Roman province, no colony in the East or in the West, no dependency of ancient Lacedemon or Athens, no ally of modern France, were ever more keenly and systematically fleeced and pillaged than these unhappy people. Every thing was made a pretext for plunder. They struggled for liberty under Charles I. and were plundered. They struggled for royalty against the rebellion, and were plundered. They fought for James II. and were plundered. The robberies of the rebellion were legalized at the restoration. The robberies of the revolution were secured by a long and grievous train of pains, penalties, and disabilities, too weighty for any people to stir under. English adventurers, Scotch adventurers, Dutch adventurers, were let loose to fatten at their expence, and their fairest possessions were torn from the
owners

owners to enrich pimps, parasites, minions, generals, state creditors and land surveyors.

But a new and happier order of things has arisen during the present reign. The Catholics were first admitted to participate the blessings of that cup which the revolution bestowed upon the English people by that sovereign who is now upon the throne. If they are grateful, as I am well assured they are, it is their present king whom they must praise as the father of their liberties.

The only disabilities that now remain of that long catalogue which formerly separated them in rights from their fellow-subjects, are, that they can neither sit in parliament, nor fill the higher offices of government.

The British Cabinet, in advising the former measures of humanity and justice, have departed very far from those maxims of government, which have influenced their predecessors for two centuries past. I cannot blame them for pausing to examine the effects of what has been accomplished, before they hazard what remains to be done. Having once stirred the ballast of the vessel, it is wise and prudent to try how she sails and settles, before they again venture to alter her trim. If any thing were wanting to impress this great political truth on our minds, the woeful experience of
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our neighbours should teach us, that political innovations, however plausible, must be made with trembling caution.

God forbid, however, that I should become the advocate of galling distinctions, which uphold no great political good. It is rash presumption in any individual to pronounce decisively upon a measure which may be viewed in so many lights, and involves a variety of weighty considerations. But so far as I can see this momentous question in all its bearings, it appears to me, that there will be little danger in concluding what has been so well commenced. The political relation of this country and Ireland, as affected by religious differences, has been fundamentally changed by the creation of a republic in France, and by the total want of religion among her rulers. These events have dissolved that alarming connection which formerly united the Irish Catholics to the French Government. If the union of these kingdoms is to be hereafter shaken through any attachment to French manners, and a novel constitution, the storm which is to convulse the empire will not come from the Catholics. It will arise amidst that "old leaven" who have been so lavishly praised for rebellion and regicide, and upon whom the temperate glories of the revolution have been most untruly bestowed *.

* Mr. Fox's speech on the affairs of Ireland. Woodfall's reports of the Debates of last Session, Vol. II. p. 498.

The wishes of every man, who does not see an absolute necessity for those degrading restraints, must be, with me, that such opprobrious and merciless badges of guilt should be removed from the shoulders of the Catholics, wholly, radically and promptly. The boon has been well earned by the patience and long suffering, by the constancy and unshaken loyalty of the upper ranks among them. It is a sacrifice, if it can be called a sacrifice, not less agreeable to policy, than grateful to justice.

A noble mind disdains to be debarred from hopes which are thrown open to his rivals, however remote his prospect to enjoy them. The people feel that they are degraded by the distinction made between them and the rest of his Majesty's subjects. It is here that the chief sting of these disabilities festers. The immediate advantages of unbarring the avenues to those places which are now shut against them, would be extremely trivial. They are not in a state to profit by the privilege which they claim. It would be very fallacious to estimate the grievance, as if a similar restraint were imposed upon three fourths of the people of Great Britain. Those who are to govern or to serve the state in its higher offices, must possess some rank, education, and means of life. In Ireland, persons of this description are almost wholly confined to the reformed religions.

A few

A few noblemen and gentlemen of landed property, some rich leaseholders, and not many opulent persons who have realized money by shop-keeping and trade, constitute the entire Catholic gentry. It is from the lowest orders of the people that this religion derives its greatest strength of numbers; from farmers of a few acres of land at a rack rent, from labourers, menial servants, and handicraftmen. To talk to such poor persons of their wretchedness, in being superseded and cut out by law from all chance and hope of becoming Members of Parliament, Revenue Commissioners, Vice Treasurers, Chancellors, and Judges, would be to insult, not to pity them.

It so happens, however, that the upper ranks of the Catholics, who are alone directly interested in the attainment of this enfranchisement, are well affected to administration; while the inferior classes to whom it is of little importance, are in some counties extremely unquiet. I do not urge this as a reason for withholding concession; I do it to shew, that we must trace those discontents which exist to some other causes.

These causes are to be found in the machinations of France acting upon the "old republican leaven" in Belfast, and other places, long previous to the commencement of hostilities. Dazzled
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by the progress of the French revolution, which has raised in its violent and giddy whirls so many wicked and obscure men to the top of public affairs, a set of needy and abandoned individuals have planned the most dangerous and singular conspiracy that is to be found in the annals of mankind. Its object is to effect a separation between Ireland and this country, and to form a republican government under the protection of France. Its resources are the seduction of the lowest orders of the people, under the false, and now stale pretext, of equality and freedom. Every stratagem which cunning and want of principle could suggest, has been adopted to detach them from the present constitution. Seditious newspapers, pamphlets, and treasonable hand bills have been circulated among them. In public, frequent assemblies, violent resolutions, and more violent speeches, were employed to inflame the passions even to madness. In private, every artifice was attempted which could work upon the weakness of the human mind. Dissenters in Dublin, in Belfast, and in the remainder of the North, were the first movers and principal support of this conspiracy. But they were aware how impossible it was to move society from its foundations, as they wished to move it, unless the great mass of the people were seduced to assist their design. For this purpose, the Catholics were to be gained.

Forth-

Forthwith, a new and unheard of cry was set up, by these profligate innovators, of commiseration and regard for a sect whose principles of government they abhorred, and whose tenets of religion they despised. Emancipation of their Catholic brethren, and a Reform in Parliament, went forth as the public watch-words. But the hopes held up to private converts were an agrarian distribution of property, and a total exemption from tithes. Sensible that they had to operate upon a brave but volatile people, they pursued the same plan which has succeeded in France, but has fortunately failed in Great Britain. They proceeded to augment, unite, and discipline their converts by affiliated clubs. These venomous and baneful weeds were trained to creep and climb until they should fill the country, and choak up the growth of every thing that was noble and generous in the soil. Nothing was neglected to ensure success, and to prevent discovery. The wretched conspirators were bound to each other by horrid and mystic oaths. The matter of their tremendous pledge, was to be faithful to France, to preserve inviolable secrecy, and to propagate their principles by encreasing their converts. Assassination and massacre were added as precautions more flagitious and secure. Friends, brethren, fathers, every endearing relation of life, were to be scrupulously immolated to this dreadful object. Any attempt to expiate crime by a disclosure of guilt,

was followed by inevitable destruction. If the murderers of an informer had leisure to indulge their sportive feelings, the terrors of dissolution were aggravated by cruel and lingering tortures. Every magistrate who stepped forward to discharge his duty, and preserve the peace; who ventured to suppress their meetings, to caution the wavering, and apprehend the guilty, was marked and written down for death. He was shot from behind some wall or hedge, and sometimes in the open day. But if chance or prudence preserved him, for a little space, from the aim of these impatient lurkers for his blood, his house was beset, and forced by a numerous banditti, who murdered him amidst the cries, and in the very embrace and bosom of his family.

Not less active to secure weapons than to prevent discovery, they assembled in large bodies during the night, they surrounded every house where arms were kept, and tore them from the owners under menaces of sword and fire. In some places they laid the opulent farmers under contribution; in many more they committed acts of violence the most atrocious and irreparable. It was impossible for any individual to resist their attacks by the mere strength of his private family. The enemy stood as often within his doors as without. Servants fed by their master's bounty, and brought up under his roof, were sworn into the conspiracy;

racy ; and have been known, in some instances, to plan the attack, and to point out the opportunity for assassination. Against outrages so extensive and enormous, there was no remedy but in flight, or the interference of a military force. Before they did interfere, many quiet and respectable families were expelled from their habitations by terror of those ruffians.

During these nocturnal arrays and domiciliary visits, every other means were pursued which could advance their treasonous designs. Attempts were made to corrupt the soldiery. A correspondence was kept up with France to expedite an invasion. A large quantity of arms was transmitted from thence. Fortunately a principal consignment was seized before it reached the intended place of debarkation. A plan was set on foot to seize the person of the Lord Lieutenant ; and, in some counties, it was designed to massacre every individual who was deemed hostile to that revolution which the conspirators were resolved to promote.

These charges against the United Irishmen and Defenders do not rest upon vague rumour, or individual assertion. They are authenticated by the most clear and consistent evidence, openly delivered at various trials which have taken place in Ireland, from the period of Jackson's conviction, to that of Lord Carhampton's tenants

for conspiring his murder. The witnesses were numerous, consistent in their narratives, and unconnected with each other. Their testimonies have been sanctioned by the verdict of juries, in every county where these troubles have prevailed. Many of the guilty have suffered the penalty of the law. Many more have received life from the mercy of the crown, and not a few have retired to America, anticipating conviction in a sense of their crimes.

When the schemes of the United Irishmen, in the North, and of the Defenders in the counties of Meath, Dublin and Kildare, were thus unequivocally proved by their conduct, and the confession of their accomplices, what other measures could a wise and prudent government pursue, but those which have been employed? Were they to tolerate seditious meetings and conventions, assembled notoriously for promoting rebellion and over-throwing the constitution; or to repress them by vigorous and wholesome statutes?

But it is contended, that the sole object of these meetings was to exact a Reform in Parliament, and to procure Emancipation for the Catholics; and that the laws passed to suppress them were new and tyrannical encroachments upon the national freedom.

The conduct of the New Whigs, in judging of motives and measures, is in open violation of all the usual rules which regulate the opinions of mankind. Where all legislators have found it necessary to innovate, by making new laws framed to meet new exigencies, and to keep pace with the progress of human crimes, these statesmen are enemies to innovation. They are venerationers of antiquity, and hold it sacrilege to deface the pillars of the constitution. But in the essential form of government, which every wise legislator trembles to break in upon, they are eager to dabble with their dirty experiments. They feel neither doubt, nor remorse, nor scruple, but rip up, and cut, and patch, and disfigure the constitution, to their own idle, capricious, new-fangled, flimsy taste. For the laws of treason and sedition, as they were passed some centuries ago, they are inspired with sacred awe, and they kindle with pious zeal against those who would depart from the customs of their Fathers. But they feel no such enthusiasm for that venerable altar of liberty upon which these portions of our rights were inscribed and consecrated. They will not spare, nor do they pardon those who wish to spare from their unhallowed hands, the holy edifice itself, in which, and through which, this country has been so often blessed.

They are eager to attribute the most injurious intentions to government, and the friends of the constitution. Neither protestations, nor proofs, nor the very nature of things, can satisfy their doubts, or allay their suspicions. But in balance to this want of charity, they yield their assent to the professions of the French Republic, and of its friends in these kingdoms, with the most liberal credulity. Whatever is weak in them, they are sedulous to make strong. On the one side, every measure is corrupt, wicked, insincere, and instituted on a studied design to destroy the liberties of the empire ; on the other, all is humanity, sincerity, virtue, peace, and the sacred love of order, freedom and the constitution. The treasonable designs of the United Irishmen have been proved by writings, by oaths, by confessions, by every means of proof through which conviction can be brought home to the human heart. But the New Whigs will disregard what is proved, and believe what is professed !

It has been made another charge against the administration of Ireland, that they have imprisoned many innocent persons upon accusations of treason, without proof, or suspicion of their guilt.

It cannot be fairly contended, from the circumstance of an acquittal, that there was no ground to accuse such as have been arraigned. The jury
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who tries the indictment may negative, by their verdict, the absolute conclusion of guilt. But the jury who found that indictment, ascertained by the very same forum, a probable ground to accuse. It certainly may have happened that some innocent persons have undergone a temporary confinement. This might necessarily ensue from the artful constitution of the conspiracy. It was subtle and extended in its nature. The instruments were obscure, illiterate and desperate men. Its plan was carried on by subordinate and limited societies, in detached parts, and at different meetings. No person could have seen the whole of their transactions in a regular series, and the most active must, in some instances, have relied upon the testimony of others. Hence it might happen that some individuals did suffer the legal consequences of suspicion upon ill-founded grounds of accusation. But hence it did also happen, that many who were deep in guilt were enabled to escape. The principle, which allows of suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, admits of arrests upon proofs and suspicions too feeble to convict upon trial. All that can be required of those to whom, for the common good, this high power is entrusted in dangerous times, is, that it should be used with conscientious discretion. It is not pretended by the most malignant croaker, that innocent and unhappy men have been maliciously crushed by this authority

to gratify private resentments. A speedy liberation, without the expence or hazard of a trial, is the very reverse of proof that it was exercised in wantonness and oppression. The facts, therefore, which are stated in this inculpation of the Irish Government might be admitted, and the imputation of blame drawn from them, would still be unjust.

But there is no man who has taken salt at the same table with a Republican, who does not feel that many of the liberated had more reason to thank the mercy of Government in their deliverance, than to arraign its justice in their confinement. In some instances the proofs were dubious. In others a disclosure of the evidence would have furthered the escape of more capital and daring offenders. The object of conviction was not to shed human blood, but to make an impressive example upon a deluded people ; and it is the wise and wholesome lenity of Government, which the New Whigs convert into the accusation of rancorous and merciless oppression.

Another charge which has been made against the present Government is, that they have disarmed particular districts, and superseded the civil administration of the country, by introducing a military police.

Instead of perverting the political maxims of tranquil times to critical situations for which they were never

never framed, let any honest man say what he should think of the folly and debility of a government, which, when the country was threatened with invasion, left arms in the hands of those patricides, who were eager to join the invaders. Arms, in which the possessors had no property, but through robbery or treason. Arms, which were originally forced from loyal owners, or else procured by French gold and French assistance.

Ought not the military to have been called in to oppose a force which the civil power was found too feeble to quell? A force, formidable from its numbers, its object, its ferocity, its accurate and prompt intelligence, and its being destitute of all visible and permanent station. When the usual and common arm of the law had been tried, and was found too weak, either the country was to be undone, or means of more than common strength were to be called forth to quell this power of darkness, which spread universal terror and dismay under cover of night, and was scattered by the approach of morning.

When a military force acts over an extensive district, some cases of particular hardship, and even of outrage may possibly occur. A brave disciplinarian, whose situation is subordinate, cannot always distinguish between the letter and the spirit of his orders. Individuals, when flushed with power newly acquired, will sometimes reel
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beyond the sober boundary line, to which discretion limits the application of force. I am well assured, however, that the instances of oppression, which have been recently brought forward by a noble Earl in the House of Lords, have been grossly misrepresented to him *. That gallant officer is too well acquainted with the British soldiery, to charge them with indiscriminate and wanton outrage in the execution of their orders. If his high rank and general residence in this country could have allowed him the opportunity of being well acquainted with the situations of the disaffected districts, the temper of the inhabitants, and the treatment which the army has in general received, he would find every reason to indulge his inclinations in applauding the steady, temperate, loyal, and forbearing conduct of his Majesty's troops,

But if we were to admit all the unfortunate cases which have been alledged to their utmost extent,—if we were to emblazon them with cir-

* A poor word-spinning democratic Baronet has stated in the House of Commons, that he has been informed that 4000 families were burnt out of their habitations in the county of Armagh. As he is a member of the Corresponding Society, we may give a good guess at the source of his information. It is fortunate, that when his correspondent was so wicked as to tell a deliberate and malignant falsehood, he was so foolish as to exceed all bounds of credibility.

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cumstances of ten-fold aggravation, still they would sink into insignificance when contrasted with the savage and frequent barbarities practiced by United Irishmen and Defenders previous to the introduction of the present police. It is true, that if it had not been brought forward, the perturbed districts could not now complain of domestic regulations, which the Irish peasantry have usually followed as the habitual and salubrious law of an industrious life ; nor of coercions applied to prevent opportunities of guilt ; nor of force opposed against actual violence and open crime. But all Ireland must have deplored, that a French conspiracy had raised its audacious front, and marched throughout the kingdom with giant strides ;—that the nobility, the gentry, the yeomanry, and every one who had a permanent interest in the safety of their country were disarmed and defenceless, while a disordered and misguided peasantry paraded the land, arrayed in the very arms of which they had despoiled their superiors, inflicting death, robbery, confiscation, violation, and oaths of fealty upon whomsoever they pleased ; public justice eluded, insulted, and openly beaten down ; no safety for property, for conscience, or for life ; timid men forced either to contravene their allegiance by treasonable associations, or to violate involuntary oaths at the hazard of their lives ; while the honourable and
 resolutely

resolutely good, must either determine to abandon their dwellings and their property for an attachment to their sovereign, the constitution of the country, and the integrity of the empire, or else to lay their head each night upon the pillow, counting on a melancholy chance of life until morning, only from the doubtful success of a struggle to preserve it.

Evils so rapid and alarming in their progress required a countercheck unusually vigorous and active. The remedy may be severe, but it is efficacious; and its operation is mild compared with the tortures of the malady it is applied to cure. A rabid flaver everlive of reason, and poisonous to life, overruns and infects the country. The caustic, which searches out and cauterizes the venom, may inflict a deep and burning wound. But if it be not applied, the inevitable result is madness and death. To withdraw it in the moment of operation, would be merciless barbarity; and blessed be that humane and steady skill, which works out lasting health from temporary pain.

These are not the cold sentiments of a stranger solicitous to preserve the dominion of Ireland to this country, and regardless of the means. They are seen and felt by the yeomanry and gentry of that island, whose dearest interests are involved in
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the event ; they are now in arms to give effect to the system, and to co-operate with that military who are denounced as the bane and ruin of the country.

The disturbed state of Ireland, and the attachment of the conspirators to France, is at length admitted by the New Whigs ; but they perversely attribute the evils which subsist to the very remedies introduced to suppress them. It is not easy to conceive upon what false principle of argument they strive to remove the odium of criminality from acknowledged rebels, and impose it upon government. The strong presumption of guilt lies heavy upon those who rise against legitimate power, which they are bound by the law and by their oaths to obey. Acts of tyrannous and grinding oppression may undoubtedly excuse society in shaking off that government which abuses the great object of its creation. But it should be the awful work of a whole nation, roused beyond the ultimate pitch of human endurance, by flagrant and substantial crimes against the public weal. It is not the denial of some theoretical innovation, demanded by a club of short-sighted men, that can justify a recourse to arms by their profelytes. Fair and sober liberty is not to be defiled and desecrated by barbarous ceremonies, in which the ungirt votaries celebrate their orgies by frightful wounds and frantic gashes. Unless
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the want of a Reform in Parliament can justify a rebellion in 40, or 50,000 persons, against the wishes of the rest of the nation who exceed three millions in their aggregate numbers, there can be no justification for the present conspirators. Most assuredly they are not to extract a palliation of insurgency from the consequences of their own insurrection. Nor are they to enumerate the restraints used to repress rebellion, amongst those hardships which have caused their revolt.

But ministers are held up to public obloquy because they do not now concede a Parliamentary Reform to the United Irishmen and Defenders as certain means to allay those discontents which agitate the country. Mr. Fox, "good easy man," knows no other principle of government but to concede. To oppose uniformly whatever is suggested by administration, and to concede as uniformly whatever is demanded of them, constitutes the great maxim of his politics. Those who recollect by whom this clamour for a reform in Parliament was raised, will perceive that the concession, if made, would be of little avail. It is to Hamilton Rowan, Napper Tandy, and others of that cast, to whom their country is indebted for the excellent device. The New Whigs are mere second hand agents to promote a plan, which met its first great patrons in the accomplices of Mr. Jackson, and the partners

ners of his correspondence with the French Republic. What tenets are the disciples of that school likely to hold, whose principal masters have been guilty of treason? The conduct of those who are at liberty to indulge their hopes and their wishes without disguise, may give a clue to the sentiments of the gang that are at home. Those tried patriots, Messrs. Muir and Paine, were likewise advocates of a reform in Parliament*. Free from personal motives, they had nothing more in contemplation than the glory and interest of the empire. Exile has assayed the patriotism of Themistocles, of Cimon, Demosthenes, and Camillus, in contradiction to a sentence of condemnation passed by their fellow citizens. But our patriots scorn to manifest their integrity by heaping new services upon their ungrateful country. The precious hours of their relegation, are consumed in devising schemes for the subjugation and plunder of the people whom they profess to love. They applaud that invasion, of which the avowed object is, to tear from us the dominion of the seas, and to establish the commerce of France upon the ruins of our own.

* Paine's Rights of Man, were diffused over Ireland with unwearied industry.—Muir corresponded with the United Irishmen. He circulated their address throughout Scotland. He proposed, in one of the Scots affiliated Societies, to make a common cause with their Brethren in Ireland, and to answer an address in which the latter had invited them so to do.

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As the representative slaves of this imperial state, they crouch down at those very feasts which prematurely celebrate the triumphs of France in the humiliation of Great Britain. They fawningly lick the feet of those tyrants to whom they look up for the offals of that blood and devastation which may escape from their hands.

Examples, however, are unnecessary to ascertain the sentiments of the United Irishmen. There is no man who is acquainted with the state of Ireland, who is not well assured that they would despise the meagre concession, except, so far as it might prove the means of fresh and more decisive changes; that they are rank, decided, incurable republicans, whose turbulence mildness cannot appease, whose notions of Government no alteration can satisfy, short of a constitution established under the influence and guaranteed by the power of Republican France.

We are not bound to seek for other reasons to reject this measure, than its inability to effect the purpose for which it is pressed upon us. It might serve to animate the hopes of the Republicans, but it would not reconcile them to the present constitution.

Let us, however, assume for an instant, that this Reform would work all those specious wonders,

ders, which its advocates profess; that, subdued by this potent spell, the United Irishmen and Defenders would forget their oaths of rebellion, and their habits of insurrection, and quietly subside into the peaceable mass of the industrious community. Let us also suppose, that the Solons, the Lycurgi, the Minos's and Pompilii, of this enlightened fraternity, had unanimously concerted a determinate plan, for renovating the Commons House of Parliament. That these patient sages, having completed their toilsome research into ancient institutes, their accurate survey of the information and political state of their country, and their severe scrutiny of its customs and manners, had felt an inspired concordance of opinions, and, resting from their holy labours, had exultingly proclaimed the constitution they meant to bestow upon their fellow-citizens, the best which they had capacity to receive. Let us further suppose, that it is wise to follow the dangerous precedent of concession, made in times of distress and danger; a season which strips liberality of its genuine grace, and makes the largesses of benevolence resemble the offerings of fear. Let us concede still further, since concession is to be the ruling principle, that government can lose nothing of that reverence, which gives such a light, but firm hold upon its subjects, by an unconditional surrender to the haughty demands of an armed rebellious association. Still, my dear Sir,

objections would remain behind, which it seems impossible to surmount.

The majority of the people of Ireland, do not demand this reform, and it would be neither just nor politic to condemn and recast the legislature of a country for the satisfaction of a turbulent few, to the disgust of the many who are peaceable. It is not the numerous difficulties which must occur in the plan and execution of every such reform that would alone perplex and embarrass us. A reform in the Irish Parliament involves a point of still greater magnitude and peril than the mere changes which might ensue in the civil regulation of Ireland. It touches the connection of the countries and their union, as one common empire to the very heart. I need not specify the reciprocal advantages which result to the Sister Kingdoms, from this intimate consolidation of their interests and their strength. Among the consequences which might follow, if Ireland were to form a distinct empire, of an inferior order, proportioned to her strength, the most prominent is, that she must lean either upon France or Great Britain for support. From that moment she would become the victim of internal agitation and disquiet. Harassed by the intrigues of the respective partizans of her powerful neighbours, during peace, and made the bloody theatre of their most obstinate

stinate conflicts, during war, she would suffer more than Scotland suffered previous to the accession of James VI. to the English throne. The large support which she derives from being considered as part of a powerful Empire would immediately sink from under her. She could no longer derive any direct advantage from the extended trade, the immense capital, or the powerful navy of Great Britain. If she looks at the present situation of America, with respect to foreign powers, she will learn to appreciate these benefits at their real value. I do not urge this to diminish the advantages which result to Great Britain from her union with Ireland. They are of the utmost importance. But I do it to shew that the connection is at least as beneficial to Ireland as to her. He is an enemy to the two countries, who considers them as separate powers having distinct and rival interests. They are sisters of the same house, portions of one empire, demanding a reciprocal sacrifice of partial accommodations and prejudices to their common good.

When the situation of the two Islands is taken up in this light, the legislature of Ireland appears as the most critical and complicated system of government in Europe. It is not obnoxious to the majority of the people. It is fully competent to all the beneficial purposes of actual government, and it preserves the harmony and

connection of the countries. Can human understanding arrogate to itself the power of placing the balance more happily than long experience and a fortunate concurrence of events have fixed it? What person can say, he has found a more effectual mean to protect the weaker country from subjugation on the one hand, or the empire from breaking into pieces on the other? The history of distinct kingdoms united under one common head, and particularly the fate of those detached sovereignties which constitute the present territories of Spain and France, may teach us not to despise and reject a system which has been gradually smoothed and shaped down to the habits, the opinions, the interests and the prejudices of the two kingdoms. A great, and therefore a cautious Statesman, would not at any time volunteer an experiment, which might destroy that subtle and attracting matter, by which the countries cohere; and thus crumble the whole frame of the empire into disjointed atoms. He would particularly deprecate innovation during the continuance of a dangerous war. He would feel that he might thereby cripple the energies of government, while an artful enemy was fomenting dangerous divisions among the people; and that no alteration could prove salutary, when concession and arrangement must depend upon opportunity and fear, instead of a calm contemplation of expediency and right.

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The New Whigs, however, wish to hatch their reforms in a tranquil season. They are the declared advocates of an immediate peace. But they are silent as to the means by which we are to obtain this fair blessing from the French Republic. Lord Malmesbury's last negociation has removed any doubts which could exist as to the determination of the Directory to continue the war. It has, in my humble judgment, given us a fatal proof of the ardour with which our cabinet are bent on peace. To prove this, let us advert briefly to the papers laid before Parliament by his Majesty's command.

Soon after the Negociation commenced, the French Plenipotentiaries demanded the absolute cession of *all* our conquests "*as an indispensable preliminary of the negociation of the peace with England.*" They request our ambassador to explain himself with regard to this restitution, and to consent to it, if he is sufficiently authorised so to do; if not, to *send a messenger* to his court, in order to procure him the necessary powers*. It is replied by Lord Malmesbury "that his instructions do not authorise him to admit, as a PRELIMINARY PRINCIPLE, what the declarations of the French Commis-

* Official Papers, p. 29.

"sioners seem intended to establish*." The next dispatch from his own court commands him to reject the claim as unreasonable, and to demand a *contre projet*, since the plan of peace presented on the part of Great Britain, had not been approved.† For two months, the French Ministers, acting under immediate communications from the Directory, expressly assent to the propriety of this demand, and virtually abandon their own *sine qua non* preliminary.‡ Under

* Official Papers, p. 30.

† Ibid, p. 31.

‡ They assented to the propriety of giving in a *contre projet*, Off. Pap. p. 36. They gave our Minister room to expect it speedily in a conference mentioned. ib. p. 36. They virtually surrendered their demand of cession, as a preliminary to negotiate, when they agreed to give in a *contre projet*. They did more. They shewed that they considered our proposals as reasonable, when the Plenipotentiaries of France declared, that the Directory "had consulted their allies, and stated, that unless "they meant to continue the war, France must be released from "her engagements, and enabled to a certain degree, to meet "our proposals." Off. Pap. No. 29, p. 41, No. 30, p. 42. Those who examine the papers of the second negotiation, will see that the French Executive Government, so long as they wished to appear earnest for the conclusion of peace, pursued those very measures which our Ministers contended that they ought to have pursued in the first. So much for the ingenious defenders of France, and the arraignment of our cabinet's sincerity in Lord Malmesbury's first mission. The comparison will shew the people what reliance they ought to place upon the ingenious comments of the present opposition.

the

the pretence of forming a *contre projet*, they procrastinate all measures towards concluding a treaty. But, with the most insidious views, they require that the appearance of deliberation and business should be kept up, when nothing was going forward.

At length their domestic conspiracy being ripened, the shew of conciliation became no longer necessary. The majority of the Directory had confirmed themselves in absolute power, by an act of injustice, more enormous than any eastern tyrant has heretofore committed, or than Asiatic slaves have ever endured.* After the

* Nothing can give this country a more forcible idea of the situation of France, than the result of the struggle here alluded to, between the legislative and executive powers of France.

Thucydides, after detailing the political dissensions and massacres at Coreyra, has some reflections upon the civil commotions which distracted Greece, so applicable to the contests between the several parties in France, that I cannot forbear to quote some of them. The entire passage is too long to insert in a note, but it is well worthy of our most serious attention. The reflections correspond so exactly with the effects of the French system, so far as it has extended, that we may anticipate, in the miseries of Greece, the final consequences of its eventual success in Europe. The result to that fair and free country, after a most bloody contest in every one of her several governments, and a general war in which some states were exterminated, was the

murder, or transportation of part of the Executive Magistracy, and of every distinguished person

the total destruction of the morals of the inhabitants, the enervation of their courage, and their final subjugation by Philip of Macedon.

Παντων δ' αὐτῶν αἰτίων, ἡ ἀρχὴ ἡ διὰ πλεονεξίαν καὶ φιλοτιμίαν· ἐκ δ' αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐς τοὺς φιλονεικίαν καθίσταμενων τοὺς προθυμοὺς. οἱ γὰρ ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι προσαντες, μετ' ὀνοματίας ἑκάτεροι εὐπρεπτοὺς, πλεονέκτους τε ἰσονομίας πολιτικῆς, καὶ αἰσιοκρατίας σωφρονὸς προτιμήσει, τὰ μὲν κοινὰ λόγῳ διαπραγμανομένους, ἀλλὰ ἰσχυροῦντο, πάντι δὲ τρωτῶν ἀγνωρίζονοι ἀλλήλων περιγίγνεσθαι, ἐτολμήσαν τε τὰ δεινότερα, ἐπέευσαν τε, τὰς τιμωρίας ἐπὶ μείζους οὐ μετρίως τε δίκαια καὶ τῇ πόλει ἐπιφορῶν προτιμήσεις, ἐς δὲ τοὺς ἑκάτεροις ποῦ αἰεὶ ἥδονην ἔχον ὀρεζόντες, καὶ ἡ μετὰ ψήφῃ ἀδικῶν καταγνώσεως, ἡ χεῖρι κλωμένοι τοὶ κρατεῖν, ἱτοιμοὶ ἦσαν τὴν αὐτῶν φιλονεικίαν ἐμτιμπλάναι. ὥστε εὐσέβεια μὲν ἡδύτεροι ἐνομίζον, εὐπρεπεία δὲ λόγῳ, οἷς ἐξυμῶσαι ἐπιφθόνως τι διαπραξασθαι, ἀμείνων ἦκεν. τὰ δὲ μετὰ τῶν πολιτῶν ὑπ' ἀμφοτέρων, ἡ ὅτι ἐξυμνάζοντο, ἡ φθόνῳ τὴν περιειναι, διεφθέροντο. οὕτω πασὰ ἰδέα κατὰ κακοτροπίας διαλάσσει τῶν ἑλλήνων. καὶ τοὺς εὐθεῖς (οὐ τοὺς γενναίους πλείους μετεχέει) καταγελῶσθαι ἠφάνισθη· τοὺς δὲ ἀντιτεταχθῆαι ἀλλήλοις τῇ γυνάμῃ ἀπίστως, ἐπιπολὺ διηνεγκεν. καὶ γὰρ ἡν ὁ διαλύων ἤτε λόγῳ ἐχέει, ἤτε ὀρκῳ φοβερός. κρείσσει δὲ οὐκ ἀπαντες λογισμῶν ἐς τοὺς ἀνελπίστον τὴν βέλπειν μὴ παθεῖν πολλὸν προσέκοπεν, ἡ πιστεῦσαι εὐδυνάτο. καὶ οἱ φαυλοτεροὶ γυνάμην, ὥς τὰ πλείω περιεγίγνοντο. τῷ γὰρ δέδιναι το, τε αὐτῶν ἰδέας, καὶ τοὺς ἐκ τῶν ἐκνεντῶν ξυνετῶν, μὴ λόγῳ τε ἡσους ὡσι, καὶ ἐκ τῶν πολυτροπῶν αὐτῶν τῆς γυνάμης φθάρσας πρὸς ἀνελπίστον, τολμήσας πρὸς τὰ ἐργὰ ἔχοντες. οἱ δὲ καταφρονέοντες καὶ πρὸς ἀνελπίστον, καὶ ἐργῶν οὐδὲν σφας δὲν λαμβάνειν αὐτῶν γυνάμην ἐξέειν, ἀφρακτοὶ μάλλον διεφθέροντο. Thucyd. Hist. Lib. 3. sect 82 and 83.

“Avarice and ambition were the original causes of these evils, which were finally encreased by that spirit of party zeal, which is the necessary result of an emulous and constant opposition. In every State the Leaders of the respective factions dignified

son of the Councils; France and Peace were equally prostrate at the feet of those tyger-hearted despots.

The

nified their cause with the most specious and honourable appellations. Those who were of the democratic interest, described that constitution, as a state of civil equality, while those who struggled in behalf of aristocracy, extolled it as a government of the politic and wise. All sides professed in their speeches to have no other views than to promote the public good. But their real object was to overcome their rivals and to make the plunder of the community a reward of success. Influenced by such motives they were inflamed with the most deadly animosity against each other, and laboured to accomplish their schemes by the most daring and flagitious actions. Punishments the most atrocious and cruel were mutually inflicted, not according to the rules of justice, and the welfare of the state, but according to their own arbitrary pleasure; for both sides were ready to glut their animosity either with the sentence of an iniquitous tribunal, or by means of assassination and violence. Religion was universally despised, and to effect the worst of purposes by the delusion of fair, but faithless promises, was admired and applauded. Those citizens who joined neither party were indiscriminately slaughtered by both, either through resentment that they had refused their assistance, or through envy that they were exempt from those calamities which the several factions endured. Thus wickedness existed in every possible shape throughout Greece, by means of these civil commotions. Openness of mind which comprehends whatever is generous and noble was banished with derision from social intercourse; and to countermince an antagonist by perfidy and dissimulation was preferred as the most honourable road to success. Wherever reconciliation was attempted no reliance could be placed on the solemnity of a promise or the sacred awe of an oath. Hopeless of a firm and lasting concord, the parties were harassed in keeping perpetual

The negociators, on the part of France, were immediately changed. The demand of a total cession of our conquests as a preliminary to negotiation was deliberately renewed, and Lord Malmesbury was desired, if he had not sufficeint powers to make the sacrifice, to "RETURN IN
" FOUR AND TWENTY HOURS TO HIS
" COURT, TO ASK FOR THEM*." It is farther declared to our Ambassador, that " he
" can see, in this determination of the Executive
" Directory, nothing else than an intention to
" hasten the moment when the negotiation may
" be followed up with the certainty of a speedy
" conclusion." It is likewise said, that the French Ministers have no orders to leave Lisle, thereby intimating that the return of our Ambassador was expected, when he should have received those instructions of which it is the sovereign

petual guard against the mischievous attempts of their seeming friends, whom they found it impossible to trust. *In these contests the advantage was commonly obtained by the faction that was most weak and stupid! Conscious of their own deficiencies, of the talents of their opponents, and trembling lest they should be overcome by superior eloquence, or over-reached by deep laid stratagems, they had recourse boldly, and at once, to arms and violence. While their antagonists despising their dulness, confident in superior fore-sight, and hesitating to affect by force, what they hoped to accomplish by subtlety, were attacked unawares and easily destroyed.*

† Off Pap. p. 57, 59, et Seq.

pleasure

pleasure of the directory, that he shall be himself the bearer.

Is the heart of Britain so pale and motionless with fear? Is the manly spirit of the country so completely dead and gone? Are we so utterly lost and abandoned to every feeling but the sense of sordid gain, that to arouse our resentment, I must proceed to comment upon our disgrace? Must the nakedness and shame of the country be laid bare to drive the flagging Britons back again to a contest for their liberties and their lives?

The usurpers of France urge a demand the most insolent and extravagant that has ever been made upon a nation that was not wholly vanquished and undone. It is brought forward, not as a condition of peace, but as a preliminary to treaty* This country is cajoled with hopes that our refusal is acquiesced in. During a

* I am not acquainted with the determination of the Cabinet, as to surrendering up Ceylon, Trinidad, and the Cape of Good Hope in purchase of peace. It appears to me from the terms used in the negotiation, that they had resolved to give them up. Upon the impropriety of doing so, unless the relative situation of the contending countries should alter considerably, I have a decided opinion, which I shall give to the public, at a proper opportunity, let who will be Minister. The sagacious Mr. Nicholls regards them as paltry conquests!

pause

pause from diplomatic business required by the Directory, we are slandered in their public messages as authors of that delay, which is privately admitted to originate with themselves.* A public transaction, between two independent nations, is used merely as an instrument to evert and scatter those seeds of liberty, which seemed about to burst and germinate in France. Our advances towards peace are perfidiously employed as means to protract the contest, and foment a more rancorous and deadly animosity in the subjects of the Republic against the people of England.

When this is effected, we are cast off with scorn. A torrent of insolence, scoffs and insult is pour'd down upon the suppliant head of this petitioning country. The original demand, which had been peremptorily refused, is renewed with the most offensive aggravation. It omits the proposal that an English messenger may bear this unconditional surrender on our parts, from the court of St. James's, to its representative in France. Nothing less will satisfy their haughty revenge than that the Ambassador Plenipotentiary, of Great Britain shall pass between the countries at the notice of a few hours. That the representative of our sovereign and of this

* Off. Pap. p. 43.

empire,

empire, shall, with his own hands, bring the liberty, honour and prosperity of his nation, bound and haltered to the feet of the French Republic, to expiate the heinous offence of presuming to defend ourselves. Even after treatment like this, our ambassador patiently renews the most reasonable of all reasonable requests. He begs to know from the Ministers of France, the terms upon which she will vouchsafe to grant us peace.* The propriety of this claim had been previously admitted on the part of the Directory. For two months they had deluded us with the hope that they were at work to satisfy it. Yet, even a boon which could not be refused to an Eastern Rajah is denied to us. They avow that this would not be the last, nor (to use Lord Malmesbury's words) "perhaps the most humiliating concession required of us. But they will not condescend to disclose to us those conditions which thus "thunder in the index." They refuse to give a *contre projet*, and tell us, with an insulting sneer, that by these means they facilitate peace.† The ambiguity of the expressions cannot disguise their meaning. The real purport of

* Off. Pap. p. 56.

† The words are, " Le Lord Malmesbury ne peut voir dans " cette determination du Directoire Executif qu'une intention de " hater l'instant ou les negociations pourront etre suivies avec la " certitude d'une prompte conclusion." Off. Pap. p. 59.

the note is, that we are not yet reduced into a situation even to hear the conditions upon which alone they design to grant us peace. We are not sufficiently broken down and subdued to receive the law from the *Grande Nation* as other states have received it; and they will wage eternal war, or accomplish our ruin.

Conduct so glaringly perfidious and overbearing, even Mr. Sheridan has refused to defend. He admits, "yet casting many a lingering look behind," that our cabinet were sincere in the late negotiations for peace; and that it is the wish of the Directory to prolong the war. There are a species of intellectual beggars, however, who must catch up, from very need, the threadbare, cast off fancies of their superiors. Mr. Nicholls has avowed his opinion that our ministry were not sincere. The poor man fumbles and grovels in the mire of party politics; and, exultingly shakes his muddy head in the belief, that, by rendering himself blind, he obscures the sight of his countrymen*.

Avoiding

* It is but common justice to Mr. Sheridan to say, that wherever Mr. Nicholls has picked up his reason for supporting the ancient errors of opposition, he cannot have got them from a gentlemen of undoubted talents. Mr. Sheridan could never have relied upon the mere choice of a Plenipotentiary as a proof of insincerity in our cabinet. He would have drawn a distinction between the case of an Ambassador sent to the court of a Sovereign where something might depend upon personal influence, and a
Plenipotentiary

Avoiding to put forward to public contemplation such a thing as Mr. Nicholls, let me ask, what genius, what eloquence, or what artifice, can obscure from the eyes of Great Britain the implacable resentment and dreadful projects of her rival? As pledges of her resolution for war, we have her contemptuous insolence upon our supplications for peace; her infuriate denunciations of vengeance; her pointed public proscription of every thing that is dear and valuable to the country. We have her vigorous and immediate preparations to realize all that she has threatened; and we are required to put in balance against these, the assertions of a few ambitious, disap-

Plenipotentiary sent to conclude a treaty at an hundred miles distance from the residence of the French Executive power.— Neither could Mr. Sheridan, who understands and writes good English, and I believe French, interpret the words “another choice would have appeared to the Directory to augur more favourably for the speedy conclusion of peace” into a manifestation of personal dislike to Lord Malmesbury. He could only construe it into a sorry and indecent sneer upon the frequent mission of couriers during the former negotiation. We have already seen, from which side the delay that took place did in fact proceed. If we were to allow the French to choose a Plenipotentiary for us, they would, doubtless, select Mr. Nicholls himself, instead of Lord Malmesbury. It would be their interest to appoint a self-presuming, positive, passionate, dull, and wrong-headed man. The deep reasonings of Citizen De Lacroix, and the solid distinctions of Citizen Treillard, would appear to somewhat greater advantage in the history of their diplomatic conferences than they do at present.

pointed,

pointed, or foolish individuals *. If the overbearing haughtiness of our enemies, if the wounded honour

* I have seen a pamphlet of Lord Lauderdale's, intituled "*A Letter on the present Measures of Finance*". It seems that the noble Author is of the same opinion with Mr. Nicholls. He undoubtedly shews considerable taste and judgment in the selection of his partners in political measures. He joins Mr. Nicholls in his accusation of Ministers, and meekly shares the hisses of the Livery of London as a Candidate for the office of Sheriff in conjunction with Mr. Waddington. If I were to animadvert upon this pamphlet in very harsh terms, the noble Earl could have no right to complain; for few publications contain such bold and unqualified epithets as his own. But some allowance is to be made for an active mind, in which zeal is more conspicuous than judgment; and we may forgive that spleen which boils and frets itself down in a pamphlet when it is denied all other means of vent. The noble Lord declares, "that he has never been able to discover in the present Ministry any real intention to recover the blessed sings of peace". p. 7. The frequent attempts of the Ministry to negotiate; their repeated declarations to that purpose; and the stubborn insolence of the enemy, have no influence with the noble Author. Although Ministers sacrifice their personal quiet; although they hazard their continuance in power; although no private emolument can possibly result to them from a prolongation of war, the noble Lord "has never been able to remark any sincere inclination in them to shew the enemy that we wished for the conclusion of a treaty." If he has any reasons for his assertions distinct from a love of power and place, he ought to advance them; since every probable motive to which we can attribute the actions of man unite to contradict him. He admits that "they have been greatly successful in conveying to the minds of the people of this country, that the failure of their attempt to treat, rested with the French, and not with them". For this he is pleased to assign a cause no one else has ventured to bring forward,

ed honour of the country, if her unexampled victories are insufficient to "screw our courage to the

forward, and of which, he himself will be finally ashamed. His words are, "this success originates, in a great measure, from a cause as novel in itself as disgraceful to its devisers. Hitherto the communications laid before the public by government, on any negotiation whatever, whether successful or unsuccessful, have been merely official. The ideas of giving *minute and mutilated statements* of private conversations never did nor ever could enter the head of any considerate statesman". p. 8. He then proceeds to observe, "that these statements naturally increase the existing animosity between the two countries". p. 8. &c. The country, and the Ministry, and Lord Melbourne, have a right to demand from the noble Earl upon what authority he makes this charge; which, if true, is an high crime and misdemeanour in the guilty. If this mutilation was wilfully committed by our Ambassador when in France, it may exculpate the cabinet; but it implicates the honour, the fidelity, and liege duty of that excellent person, who was entrusted by his sovereign to negotiate for the interests of his people. If they were made by Ministers at home, it is a piece of weak, unnecessary, and dangerous forgery. The dispatches themselves must remain in the Treasury, and, upon a change of Ministry, the detection would be inevitably made. But whence is it that the noble Lord collects the fact that those conversations are mutilated and misrepresented? Can he say, that their tenor contradicts the official papers, and that these last are not alone sufficient to prove, that the negotiation was broken off by France? If they correspond in substance with the written notes of the Ministers on both sides, as they most assuredly do, his Lordship must have some other sources of information. I had thought, that the noble Peer's correspondents in France had long since suffered the last punishment of their atheism, of their treason, and of their animosity against England, which can be inflicted on this sort the grave. If he has filled

the sticking place," let us look to the fate of Europe. Let us view the shrunk and withered sinews

up the void which the deaths of Brissot, and Condorcet have left in his heart, his new French friends have misinformed him ; since the Directory have never contradicted those details given by Lord Malmesbury, either of the first or last negotiation. The country is entitled, therefore, to consider our Ambassador's account of the negotiation as true, at least until some grounds are pointed out to shake its probability. Let me ask then, upon what principle should the truth be concealed from the people? Does the noble Earl wish that England should be kept in the dark, upon subjects which it imports her so nearly to know, that his friends may deceive her with false accounts of the transaction, and ascend into power by rendering us dissatisfied with war, when peace is unattainable. But it is said, that this account will encrease the animosity between the countries. With respect to England, I deny the fact. The country is indeed wisely and prudently determined to prosecute the war, since she cannot terminate it with honour and with safety ; but the King, and his Ministers, and his people, are willing even now to forget their wrongs, and to conclude a treaty, if the ambition of France will stoop to it. With respect to France herself, it is utterly impossible that these statements could have that effect ascribed to them in this pamphlet. The Directory took every possible precaution to keep our account of the negotiation secret from the people. They immediately suppressed what may be called the Opposition Newspapers throughout the Republic ; and prohibited the importation of Foreign Journals, lest their subjects should be made acquainted with the truth. This fact alone is amply sufficient to prove that our statement of the negotiation is accurate even in the mind of the Directory itself.—They did not so much as dare to lay before the two Councils, or to publish in the *Redacteur*, the terms of peace which we tendered in the treaty delivered to their Plenipotentiaries. They did not transmit to them any one of the official

linens of every country, over which the rapacious and deadly arm of this necessitous republic has passed.

The neutrality of Genoa and Venice were scrupulously observed, at least with respect to the enemies of France. In return for the inaction of these governments which preserved the French in Italy, they have been utterly destroyed upon

notes which passed between our Ambassador and theirs. It is fair to infer from thence that the official papers were considered by them as being alone sufficient to prove, that the negotiation was for a time delayed, and finally broken off by themselves. They were afraid to trust the judgment of the French upon their gross and outrageous treatment of this country. I will leave it to the reader's own good sense to draw his conclusion upon the candor and motives of the noble Author in making such a rash, mischievous, and ill-founded assertion. I shall take notice of some other of his positions hereafter; among the rest, I shall observe upon an assertion common to him and many others, viz. that the French will not make peace with Mr. Pitt and the present Administration. There would be so much absurdity, disgrace, and mischief in choosing a cabinet which is to conclude peace according to the pleasure of France, that it cannot admit of a serious argument. But I shall close this subject for the present with observing, that the only documents which manifest a predilection on the part of France for particular persons, are some of the public toasts of their government. These celebrate Mr. Muir, and the distressed Patriots of Ireland and Scotland. If, therefore, we are to select a cabinet suited to the inclinations of the Directory, it is from such men we are to choose them; in other words, we must submit to change our government as one of the conditions of peace.

pretexts the most frivolous and unjust. The possessions of the state, and the private property of the inhabitants, have been severally seized and swallowed up as the lawful spoils of these merciless invaders. Venice, the most ancient power in Europe, has been bartered to the Emperor in a shameless traffic, for a part of his dominions more immediately convenient to the aggrandizement of France.

Through the same fatal attachment to political quietism, Switzerland endured the murder of her subjects, the violation of her frontiers, and the demand of a tribute. But patience and submission constitute the very worst defence against the attacks of an ambitious and profligate neighbour. All that she has purchased by her endurance is, the certainty of war without the hope of an ally to support her; and the prospect of a revolution without the chance of a struggle to avert it.

There is no possible shape whereby distinct potentates can connect or interfere with each other, in which some existing government has not dealt with France. Neutrality, negotiation, treaty, alliance, submission, have been severally tried, and with the same success. The present situation and history of Europe, does not furnish even one solitary instance in which that country

has

has respected her own faith or the rights of her neighbours, when they stood opposed to her plans of universal dominion and immediate plunder.— I have already described the result of neutrality in the catastrophes of Genoa and Venice, and in the impending fate of the Swiss Cantons. Her instantaneous violation of the preliminary articles signed at Udina, and her present conduct towards the Germanic empire, in the seizure of Mentz, are sufficient evidence of her utter disregard and contempt of treaties. Or if it be necessary to make good the charge by other instances, we may point at Tuscany, Sardinia, and the Pope. Let those who in suppleness of spirit wish to appease her by submission, consider the imprisonment of the Ambassador of Portugal, and the contemptuous treatment of the Minister from Sweden. Yet further, if these examples are insufficient to cool the ardor for French alliance, let us look to her conduct towards the Dutch Provinces, and the American States. She considers America as an enemy, and makes prize of her shipping for having presumed to exercise the right of an independent power in concluding a treaty with Great Britain.

But above all the rest, Holland stands forth a conspicuous and melancholy warning to the world of the dangerous infatuation of confiding in French professions instead of trusting to the

efficacy of a manly defence. The armies of France entered the United Provinces as they entered other parts of Europe. They professed peace and amity to the people, and declared that their warfare was only directed against the government. But the frontier had been scarcely secured, when their blood-hounds, both military and civil, were let loose to hunt out wealth, property, and domestic comfort from the too credulous nation. They have compelled those unhappy provinces to renounce their ancient constitution, and have denied them the liberty of choosing a new one. They have forced them into a war that has annihilated their fleet, destroyed their trade, and deprived them of their Colonial possessions. They have taken possession of one of their provinces, of five of their principal frontier towns, and have drained and dried up the sources of internal industry, by levying most enormous contributions *. Such are the blessings which

* Upwards of 13 millions sterling in money and goods in less than two years. The conduct of France towards America and Holland, is ably pointed out in a pamphlet intitled "Observations on the Dispute between the United States and France, addressed by Robert Goodloe Harper, Esq. a Delegate of South Carolina, to his Constituents". This work is well worthy of the attention of this country, as giving the opinion of an able and disinterested stranger upon the conduct of France towards Great Britain, and upon the boundless extent of her ambitious designs.

proceed

proceed from this republic under the names of freedom and alliance.

I make no doubt, my dear Sir, that the people of this country perceive, from the manner in which all our advances towards peace have been refused, and from the treatment which other nations have received from France, that our safety and prosperity can be secured by no other means than by a manly and resolute prosecution of the War.

Instances so flagrant as those which I have pointed out, must prevent us from erroneously estimating the temper and conduct of republican France, by such feelings and principles as influence the spirit of hostilities among civilized nations. They must impress most indelibly on our minds the firm conviction of her animosity against us, of her envy and dread of our commercial prosperity, of her utter contempt of the rights of all other nations. Yet, even these acts of perfidy and injustice are surpassed by one, which has occurred since I sat down to write. You have anticipated me no doubt when I refer to the Directory's decree denying the use of their ports to any ship that trades to Great Britain, and enacting that the possession of British produce or manufacture shall subject a neutral vessel and her cargo to confiscation as lawful prize. Under the express title of

Conquerors of Europe, the Grand Nation has determined to prescribe a new and monstrous law to neutral states. She proclaims a code to systematize her piracies by sea, as she had formerly done to regulate her robberies by land. The ordonation of this decree is a direct attack upon the property and commercial rights of every other nation. It is an attempt to extend over Europe that title to levy general contributions on neutral states which she has actually enforced at Hamburgh. Already has France exacted two heavy tributes from that imperial city at two different periods, to save her from pillage. In defiance of the rights of neutrality, and of her express convention with Prussia, she has now again sent a commissioner to demand an additional payment in money, and a rigorous compliance with her recent decree.

Should Europe acquiesce in this gross infraction of the common rights of nations, she bends her neck to receive the universal yoke which it is the avowed determination of France to impose. If she refuses, it is a direct declaration of war, and the northern powers must take up arms to vindicate their independence. England as the first commercial nation in Europe, could not submit to this decree if it had been levelled at any other state. But aimed as it is, to draw the life-blood of our greatness, it must teach us the true value
of

of French professions, of fraternity, philanthropy, and a love of peace. It marks the real object for which we have to contend against France. It is not for Trinidad nor Tricomale as the New Whigs pretend, but for the very source of all our prosperity and wealth. It is the commerce of Europe, of which they labour to deprive us. It is for the honourable opulence of our merchants, for the support of our people, for the very bread of industry which this audacious and grasping Republic would dash down from the Hands of the poor and of their families, that we are forced to continue the war.

Ought it to be felt as a doubt among an enlightened people whether they shall contribute a portion of their property to secure the rest. To preserve what is ten thousand times more precious to us than riches,---the independence of the country, the continuance of social order, and of domestic tranquility.

The great body of the people, both in the capital and in the country, acquiesce in the necessity of raising large supplies to maintain the war. The plan, however, which has been suggested for the purpose has not been so generally approved of. Many parishes in the metropolis, have condemned, by express resolutions, the new scheme
of

of taxation proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and recently sanctioned by Parliament. Some of the objections which have been thus made, were bottomed in a total misconception of the objects and provisions of the bill. Others have been ultimately removed by those modifications which it received as it passed through the committee, at a period long subsequent to these meetings.

The New Whigs, however, have tried to raise the public indignation against the measure by the harshest, and most opprobrious denunciation of its principle. The Earl of Lauderdale, also, has honoured a pamphlet with his name to expose its impolicy and wickedness. It is somewhat in vindication of the noble writer that few of the sentiments which are to be found in his work originate with himself.* He has merely lent his pen, to record the objections of his party, and there is little in the tract which has not appeared in the newspaper reports of opposition speeches, and in the resolutions of a meeting of Citizens at the Crown and Anchor. Regarding the objec-

* I shall say nothing of the scurrilous terms which his Lordship has applied to Mr. Pitt, as I am persuaded that, upon more mature reflection, he will wish to have omitted them. A man of real talents scorns to rake the kennel for that common filth, which the fury of every vulgar hand can fling with equal adroitness. A magnanimous enemy disdains to have recourse to weapons which his adversary cannot descend to handle.

tions, therefore, which are stated by his Lordship, as those upon which his party rely, I shall examine them briefly.

He states that the bill contains two principles.

1st. " It asserts that raising part of the supplies of the year by an assessment on property, is preferable to the means which this country has uniformly practised.

2nd. " It maintains that the Assessed Taxes form the best evidence of property, and afford, of course, the best criterion for imposing such an assessment,"

I shall proceed to examine the reasoning of the noble Author on both these points.

In objecting to this plan. as a mode of raising the supplies, he urges, that supposing the system of funding, to be wrong, yet that we ought to persevere in it, with the view of " convincing the enemy of our means*." His Lordship is as ready here to assume, for the convenience of his argument, that the French may be deceived by such an artifice, as he was, a few pages before, to assert their accurate knowledge of our distressed situation†. But I omit to dwell upon this seeming

* P. 20.

† P. 14.

inconsistency

inconsistency, or to enquire whether we might not purchase this opinion of our resources at too high a price. It will be sufficient to examine the main ground of the argument.

He agrees with Mr. Pitt, that it is wise to impress the enemy with an idea of the great extent of our ability to carry on the war in our method of raising the supply. So sensible is he of the usefulness of doing so, that he advises the attempt though it were to be attended with a pecuniary loss to the country. His Lordship differs only as to the means which will produce the effect. He has not pointed out what circumstances he conceives peculiar to the system of funding, which must implant this idea of our incalculable opulence in the minds either of foreigners or natives. So far as I can consider the question, the present scheme of taxation seems preferable, upon this very account to that which is patronised by his Lordship, since it possesses, in a more eminent degree, every quality which can inspire such an opinion in a reflecting mind.

These are, the magnitude of the supply to be raised; the facility with which it is raised; and the ability and willingness of the people to repay it. The quantum of the supply is exactly the same, to whichever system we resort. The facility of borrowing such parts of it, as
must

must be borrowed, cannot be diminished but it may be encreased by this plan. This must naturally happen, inasmuch as the prospect of payment is more speedy. Lastly, the ability and willingness of the people to repay is thus rendered more manifest since they undertake to raise a third of the supply within the year, and to discharge the whole of what is borrowed in less than three.

His Lordship's next objection is, that, supposing the present system of taxation to be the best, it should have been adopted before, upwards of 200,000,000*l.* had been added to our debt*.

When the noble Earl makes this observation, he seems to forget the maxim of the poet, which is worn trite, from its frequent and useful application to the œconomy of life.

*Est modus in rebus; sunt certi denique fines
Quos ultra, citraque nequit consistere rectum*

So far as Mr. Pitt has raised the supplies upon the system of funding, his conduct must be approved by Lord Lauderdale, since he recommends the measure to his country now. But it does not follow, by any means, that reasons may not, and do not exist, which would render it

* P. 19.

highly

highly pernicious to pursue the same financial plans during the present crisis, which it was wise and salutary to adopt at the former period. In consequence of the very exorbitant terms upon which government must borrow, at present, the following detrimental consequences would result from the immediate funding of a considerable loan, in compliance with his Lordship's advice, 1st. The high interest given by government would render it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the industrious merchant and manufacturer to borrow money to support their trade. 2nd. To add to the quantity of public stock, would necessarily depreciate its value, and this must operate as a very heavy tax upon transfers, without being of any service to the state. 3d. The terms upon which a large loan could be made at present, are so very disadvantageous to the country, that the existing inhabitants who constitute the community, would pay the whole sum borrowed, three times over during their lives in permanent taxes, and still leave their posterity encumbered with the debt.

Whether the noble Author has weighed these objections or not, he declares it to be "his decided opinion that funding is the best and most prudent means of defraying the extended expences of modern warfare," (p. 20.)* When he forms this

* His Lordship has supported his preference of the funded system with considerable ingenuity. He condenses the whole of his argument

this opinion, he must differ at least from his friend Mr. Fox, who supposes that our national debt is the best ally of France. I say this, because, notwithstanding the republican toasts which distinguished the last commemoration of Mr. Fox's birth-day, at the Crown and Anchor, I hope that it is wholly impossible that his Lordship could support a system, whose operation must be favourable to our enemy.

Having thus condemned the plan of raising part of the supplies within the year, by a comparative preference given to the funded system, his Lordship proceeds to attack the measure more directly in the following argument. He states it to be the wish of the Minister, to secure by his plan, a tenth of the income of individuals. That,

argument in the two following propositions, 1st. "That money raised by assuming a proportion of the property of all, must occasion a greater loss to every country, than a sum of a similar extent borrowed by voluntary subscription, except we can find a Nation where the whole property is so employed as to produce equally"; 2nd. "That the measure of that loss must be a per centage on the sum borrowed equal to the produce of the least productive part of the property and the average produce of the whole," (p. 22) If the whole sum required by government from the people were to be taken in one day, his Lordship's observation would be true to a considerable extent. But when the sum is to be taken gradually, as it is by the present act of parliament, it will, in truth, come from that part of the national capital which is least productive, just as it would in the case of a voluntary loan. The only difference is that private individuals become borrowers from the least productive part of national capital, instead of Government.

if

if he succeeds, he must of course, diminish the national expenditure in a proportional degree. Thus, says the noble author, if the revenue depending upon consumption, is 17,400,000*l*. by diminishing the income of the people, you will strike off a tenth of the expenditure, or 1,740,000*l*. which is an extravagant premium for raising 7,000,000*l*.*

Taking it for granted that the noble author has rightly stated the object of the bill, this argument is a little at variance with his assertion, that "the Assessed Taxes do not afford any evidence of real expenditure†," and his farther declaration, that "the middling classes of merchants and manufacturers, have very generally outlived their incomes‡." I am persuaded that his Lordship must give entire credit to this last assertion, or he would not have made it. It is not a very venial trespass in a man of birth and fashion, to exceed his fortune, although he may hope to discharge his debts by a sudden vault into some lucrative office. But, for that industrious class, against whom the charge is now made, notoriously to exceed their income, is such scandalous and disgraceful conduct, that no person who aspires to become a demi-sheriff of London and Mid-

* P. 21.

† P. 25, 26.

‡ P. 36.

desex, would utter the remark, if it had not been wrenched from him in a firm conviction of its truth. Undoubtedly, the statement is as unjust as it is injurious. But the point is to be settled between the "middling classes of merchants and manufacturers," and his Lordship. I have only to observe, in answer to this argument, 1st. That in cases where people exceed their income, a diminution of that income does not, of necessity, cause a proportionate diminution of expenditure, 2d. That if the assessed taxes are no evidence of national expenditure, the direct ratio of their augmentation, cannot ascertain the proportion of its consequential decrease.

It is not sufficient however, to point out the inconsistency of this argument, with some of his Lordship's other positions. He relies upon it in most of his reasonings against the bill, and it is but candid to discuss its intrinsic value.

It is defective upon no less than three grounds. 1st. It is not proved that this pressure can not operate, as every other onerous tax has operated in England, namely, to give such a stimulus to ingenuity and industry, as will cause the income of individuals to increase in a proportion sufficient to answer their increasing burthens. 2d. Although this should be impracticable,

cable, yet as the tax falls upon the rich, it should be shewn that it is not to be deducted from the annual increase of national capital, but that it must necessarily produce a retrenchment in general expenditure*. 3d. The statement upon which his Lordship forms his deduction, is altogether erroneous. He grounds his argument upon the supposition, that a tenth of the whole national income will be taken away, and that the national expenditure must consequently be reduced in the same proportion.

But it is by no means the fact that every man is to be taxed in the proportion of a tenth of his income, although it is provided that his taxes shall never exceed it. The lower classes of the community, and the direct taxes upon property, are altogether exempted from the increase. Those who are subject to it, are assessed in an augmenting scale, proportioned to their present payments. If, therefore, the principle

* In a poor country, rising rapidly in population, there is no part of its capital which is unemployed. But in a rich country, where population is rather stationary than progressive, there is a great sum of capital which is not beneficially employed. Larger floating capitals are kept by many individuals to answer the demands of trade, than is required for its actual extent. Anyone, who has had occasion to see how trade is carried on in the different ends of this island, knows that much less floating capital is found requisite in Scotland than is deemed necessary in England in proportion to the actual capital employed in trade.

were

were conceded to the noble Earl, that a proportional diminution of our revenues, arising from expenditure, must result from this additional tax, still his estimate of the consequent annual deficiency would be grossly excessive. For as much less than a tenth of the income is assumed, the expenditure cannot be diminished in the proportion of a tenth. There exists, therefore, but little chance, that those habits of abstinence will take place, which are so gravely deplored and deprecated by the Right Honourable Financier, as a dangerous evil.

If any practice of the temperate virtues could give them the salutary controul of customs over the nation, in the short period of "two years and a quarter," it would be a cheap purchase to the country, although the amount of the tax should be scattered to the winds. He is but a vulgar Statesman, who regards the people as a mere instrument to reproduce capital, and to submit to taxation. There are other circumstances, upon which the energy, the strength, the freedom and the happiness of a country must depend. The hardihood of a laborious life, the frugal temperance of manners, the manly sense of independence, may be rotted away by luxury, and they are not to be compensated by revenue. If England does not now possess the noble firmness to sacrifice her luxuries, in order to pre-

serve her independence, the basis of her prosperity is sapped and destroyed. We are reduced to that very state with which Mr. Sheridan insulted the nation when he asserted that our luxury left no comparison between the inhabitants of England and Rome.

The noble Lord next attacks what he calls the second principle of the bill, viz. "that the assessed taxes form the best evidence of property, and are of course the best criterion for collecting an aliquot part of men's estates*." He asserts, that to support this principle, three positions must be maintained. 1st. That the Assessed Taxes form a criterion of real expenditure. 2d. That expenditure is a criterion of income. 3d. That income affords a just criterion of property†.

I shall examine these positions briefly, because, in truth, it is not necessary to maintain any one of them, to justify the principle of the bill.

The first position which is controverted by the noble author, has no reference to the bill when it is considered as a general principle without any limitation. The error of such reasoning,

* P. 24. † P. 25.

becomes immediately apparent, as soon as it is observed that the chief instances by which he demonstrates the fallacy of the proposition, are exceptions provided for by the statute itself. His Lordship is right when he remarks, that houses and houses are not mere objects of idle consumption. They may either be used and occupied as objects of voluntary expence, or as the instruments and means of profit and livelihood. But when the bill expressly preserves these articles from the general operation of the principle, by an anxious and specific provision, it is neither fair nor candid in the noble author, to cite those very inconveniences which the bill excepts against, as proofs of its absurdity and injustice. Here I cannot help remarking, that the noble financier seems not even to have considered the nature and extent of those Assessed Taxes, which form the subject matter upon which this act is to operate. The Printing house of his Lordship's Printer, is the most unfortunate illustration of his argument, that he could possibly produce. If the Statesman had looked into the statute book, instead of asserting that the assessed taxes "formed no inconsiderable deduction from his Printer's profits," he would have learned, that a building so occupied, was altogether exempted from the house and window duty.

If his Lordship's opposition to his own remaining propositions is allowed to be just, it will not advance his attack upon the measure itself. Though expenditure should not be the criterion of income, nor income of capital, this is no good reason to condemn a system, in which the tax is not levied upon the incomings of the payer. The real object of the present tax is, that a part of the means of the wealthy, proportioned to what they expend in idle consumption, should be applied to the exigencies of the state. Income is not the subject of the tax; it is only a means to prevent its partial excess. The gains of the poor, and the return of capital, employed solely in commerce, are exempted altogether. Where a man's productive income falls short of 200l. per annum, he cannot pay more than, in a prescribed scale of proportions, much below a tenth of the whole. When it rises above 200l. the statute provides, that the tax shall never exceed the proportion of a tenth, but whether the individual is to pay up to that amount, is regulated, in either case by the sum of his assessed expenditure.

The instance, therefore, which is proposed by the noble Author, to prove the gross impropriety and hardships of this act, namely, that the incomes of a landed gentleman of 1000l. per annum, and that of a merchant, which is of equal amount,

amount, are taxed by it to a similar extent, must rarely occur. According to the common course of œconomy, individuals do not expend in idle consumption, sums proportioned to their income, but to the whole of their capital. When a gentleman, therefore, owns an estate of 1000*l.* a year, he may expend that entire sum in his house, his horses, and his dogs. But the merchant whose trade, yields him an income to an equal amount, is sensible of its precarious duration. He does not expend one half of it in articles which are liable to Assessed Taxes. He saves as much as he can, and traffics with all he can save. It undoubtedly may, and will happen, that this tax must fall unequally, when a man regulates his expenditure by his income, instead of his capital. But no scheme of taxation has ever been devised, which does not fall with partial heaviness upon particular persons. Those who exceed their revenue, and those who live up to it, when it is of a temporary nature, are not intitled to particular care from the state. The former is injustice to a man's family, and a fraud upon his creditors; the latter may be exempt from the second imputation, but is equally liable to the first. No government is to protect and favor extravagance by its fiscal provisions, and if the present law is so far sumptuary, as to prevent or punish these mischiefs, it will produce a most beneficial effect.

The noble Earl having thus unequivocally condemned the object and principle of the law, proceeds to arraign some of its particular regulations.

His first ground of complaint, is, that it has a retrospect,*

The time from which the statute begins to operate, was fixed at a date so very little prior to that of its passing, that it hardly deserves to be noticed. I own, indeed, that the most specious objection which has been made against the bill, is, that it deprives the people of the customary option, to avoid the tax, by discontinuing expenditure. This provision, however, is in perfect consistence with the principle of the bill. Individuals are to contribute in proportion to their means—and their Assessed Taxes are the measure of their contribution. If the provision had not been adopted, the tax would have been levied, not in proportion to the ability of the payers, but according to their several dispositions. Many persons would have discontinued their equipage from parsimony. Others would have sought consolation for a sacrifice of their immediate comforts, in the little triumph of having disappointed and dis-

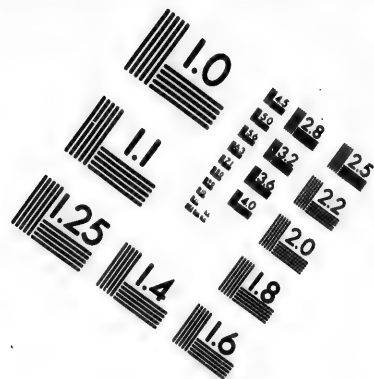
* P. 31.

treffed the Minister. The provision cannot be generally burthenfome, fince thofe who put down their horfes, carriages or fervants, muft fave more than the amount of the tax, by this diminution of their expenditure. If the capacity of the party has decreafed yet further, it is in his power to exonerate himfelf by declaration and oath, that the affeffment exceeds a tenth of his income.

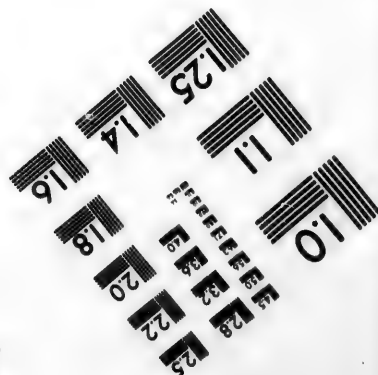
His Lordfhip, however impugns this mode of relief upon moral and religious confiderations, and urges that it may promote perjury and every fpecies of immorality*. This remark is accompanied with a sneer againft the truly refpectable and virtuous member for Yorkfhire, fo obvious, that I cannot fuppose the noble Lord is more ferious in the obfervation than Mr. Sheridan, by whom it is was originally made, with its prefent point. If thefe grave and auftere guardians of religion; if thefe new Catos, do really confider the public morals, as endangered by the temptation held out in the confequences of this oath, let them proceed more fundamentally and fyftematically to work. They muft, in the fame fpirit, put down all oaths at the Custom-houfe. They muft reform all proceedings in Courts of ecclefiaftical, equitable,

* P. 33.





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and even criminal jurisdiction. In every one of these judicial tribunals, an oath is taken to redress the wrongs, or recover the rights of the person who takes it. When our pious censors have surveyed this wide extent of their projected reformation, they will perceive that to enforce a beneficial regulation by an oath, is neither irreligious nor immoral, provided it cannot be effected so completely by any other means.

A more serious objection, which has been urged against it is, that "it forces a positive disclosure of the state of the affairs of those who choose to benefit by it*." It is, in the language of the noble Lord, a public "proclamation to the world of a man's folly, or his calamity; and, in both cases, the downfall of his credit must ensue."

It was impossible, my dear Sir, to forbear a smile at perusing this objection, which originated in the parochial resolutions of a great commercial city. A minute disclosure of a merchant's affairs, at some particular juncture, when most of his means are in supposition, would no doubt affect his credit. An inquisitorial scrutiny into private books and funds, would at all times prove detrimental to commerce, and destructive to liberty. But it does not seem so easy to point out in

* P. 34.

what manner a fair disclosure, by the individual himself, of his annual average income, for three successive years, can deprive a commercial man of any credit, to which he is justly entitled from his ability to discharge his engagements.

If one of our Bond-street acquaintance, were to continue his curricule and splendid retinue, in order to maintain his credit after his estate was gone, his coachmaker, his taylor and the remaining victims to this delusive appearance, would regard it as a swindling trick. They would do so with great justice, whether he had lost his estate from folly or misfortune ; by a throw of the dice, or a defect in his title.

In what respect does the instance which I have put, differ from that which a conclave of shopkeepers, in their parish vestry, conceive to be such a valuable city privilege, that they publicly impeach a bill which gives a collateral check to the practice ? The noble Lord applies strongly to the human feelings, when he puts the case of an individual, reduced in his means by misfortune. But it has not hitherto been contended, either in the moral or political forum, that misfortune can justify any man in assuming the false appearance of wealth, to obtain a degree of credit which his actual property is unable to support.

His

His Lordship, however, labours much more sedulously to defend the case of merchants, who exceed their income from their personal folly. He represents it as a very general evil, and asserts that the middling class of merchants and manufacturers, "struggling to support their credit, "have very generally outlived their income*." If the fact be so, what can result from such conduct, but bankruptcy? Is the person who plunges deeper into extravagance from day to day, likely to benefit his creditors by a farther extension of his credit? Is it not better that such a man should endure the natural fruits of his folly, than that his honest and industrious neighbours, who live within their income, (which I will venture to say, are 99 out of 100 of the mercantile and manufacturing classes of this country) should become sufferers from a credit that is obtained by deceit.

The only remaining objection which is made in this Pamphlet, strikes at the professed principle of the measure. His Lordship contends, that it does not exempt the poor from assessment—that, on the contrary, they "will be at least common sufferers with others, and probably greater sufferers, than the classes whose assessments are augmented†."

* P. 35.

† P. 36.

If this argument has any weight, it goes to prove that no part of the supplies should be raised within the year by taxation, as the burthen must ultimately fall upon the poor. It must proceed this length, because it never can be contended, that when the same amount of taxes are laid exclusively upon the rich, they will fall heavier upon the poor than if they had been directly imposed upon both. The reasoning upon which his Lordship founds this conclusion is, the same which he had urged before, to prove it a most extravagant system of raising the supply. He contends, that the tax must cause a reduction of expenditure among the rich, to an equal amount, and, by consequence, a similar deduction from the earnings of the poor. I have already shewn the fallacy of supposing that the consumption of the rich, will be diminished by any thing like the total produce of the tax. But if the supposition were just, it would not follow that the earnings of the poor would be reduced in the slightest degree. Whether the sum remains in the pockets of the rich, or passes into the hands of government, it does no more than change the person who distributes it, and is ultimately laid out among the people. Such a change is to a certain extent, beneficial to the nation. It would be given, by the wealthy in general, to coach-makers, tailors, servants, jewellers, picture-mongers, and toy-men. It is transferred by government, to shipwrights, rope-makers,

makers, breeders of cattle, growers of corn, and to the labouring poor; classes of the community whom it is of much greater importance to the country to cherish and support, than those who profit by it in the other alternative.

I am extremely sorry to hear it so vehemently pressed by his Lordship, that the consequences of the statute will fall most heavily upon the middle class of merchants and manufacturers, and upon the labouring poor. The observations are utterly repugnant to fact, and it requires a considerable portion of charity to believe that the author can be ignorant of their obvious tendency to excite general discontent, at a period when the efforts of every honest man should be employed to calm the popular mind. But although, I may acquit the noble Lord of any design to produce, by misrepresentation, a consequence thus wicked and abominable, I must assert, that his pamphlet can have no other effect. His Lordship is in possession of considerable talents, and private virtues. Perhaps the first are more congenial to any other species of political disquisition, than that of detailed and sober calculation which he has chosen for himself. Certainly the last can receive no consolation if the film of party zeal should ever become purged from his eyes, in reflecting that the false conclusions which he labours to establish, might raise the
most

most dangerous classes of society in rebellion, against a measure designed for their peculiar happiness and protection.

In a scheme of taxation so new and extensive, some imperfections must undoubtedly occur. Particular cases of hardship, which contradict the general principle and design of the measure, may possibly be picked out by persevering malignity. But as time and experience reveal any latent inconvenience, the wisdom of the legislature will provide a remedy. In most instances, the same experience will evince the folly of those objections which factious and self-interested clamour has raised against it. Considering the general principle, and cautious provisions of the Bill, I do not hesitate to pronounce it the most splendid instance of the integrity and fiscal skill of that Minister, to whose talents for finance the recent prosperity of the empire is an everlasting monument. He has boldly met the perils of our situation, and wisely extracted from our danger the means of our safety. He has nobly disdained to risk the glory of the country, and the happiness of posterity, in a selfish fear that his personal popularity may be obscured for a season. Nor is the measure less glorious to the great body of the people of Great Britain. The higher classes willingly submit to discharge this heavy contribution ; most assuredly not less for the safety

ty and happiness of the poor, than for their own security. It is a cheering proof, that neither our antient good sense, nor patriotism, nor love of genuine freedom, have entirely disappeared.— That people are truly and alone worthy of an honourable peace, who can patiently bear those burthens, and hardships, and dangers which are necessary to procure it.

You are well aware, my dear Sir, that if such a peace could be obtained, it must be sought for most earnestly by his Majesty's Ministers. They can reap little else, from a continuance of hostilities, than an increase of anxiety and care. If private gain be an object with any Member of the Cabinet, war, which hazards his place, adds nothing to his immediate emolument. In the hour of victory, they only share that exultation which every Englishman feels in the triumphant valour of his countrymen. In the day of disappointment and defeat, the whole burthen of national displeasure falls exclusively upon them. Every circumstance and accident which thwarts the public hope, is imputed to their want of judgment or of honesty. The discomfiture of foreign armies, the defection of allies, the general pusillanimity of Europe, the weight of taxes, the very misfortunes and inclemency of season are laid upon our Ministers, as matters of accusation, and grounds of disgrace. No man of a wise and honourable or prudent
mind

mind could endure such unmerited odium for a sordid accumulation of riches, by a wanton prolongation of war. But it would be absolute madness if he were to plunge himself, as our Cabinet must do, into such difficulties, for the sole purpose of enriching contractors and clerks, who are not so much as known to him by name.

If it be impossible to attribute the continuance of hostilities to any personal motives on the part of Ministry, it is equally idle to suppose, that the aversion of France to peace is founded on a particular enmity to the existing Cabinet. You will, I am sure, agree with me, that no measure can be more dangerous to our independence, than to suffer a foreign power to intermeddle with our domestic parties. If France does consider one set of Ministers as her particular enemies, she must regard another as the tool and instrument of her aggrandisement. It appears to me, that the chief design of the New Whigs in their present conduct, is to elicit such a declaration from the Republic*.

But

• I allude in particular to the sentiments publicly toasted at the recent celebration of Mr. Fox's birth-day. One of them, as it is given in the Morning Chronicle, is little, if at all, short of being treasonable. What can the country think of men who labour, at the present period, to impress upon the public mind, feelings which must destroy the only means of resisting an implacable enemy. It is not the first time in which degenerate Englishmen have made a voluntary sacrifice of the interests of

their

But until that is accomplished, it might be sufficient to observe, in answer to this assertion which is now circulated with considerable industry, that France has never intimated such an opinion, or refused to treat with his Majesty's present servants. It would be wrong to sacrifice, at any time, our faithful friends to the unreasonable inclinations of an enemy. It would be equally disgraceful and impolitic, to permit one so restless as the republic to nominate an administration for this imperial kingdom. But we should act infinitely worse, if we were to anticipate wishes, which our foe has no right to entertain, and to commit injustice which she has not required.

I shall go further, and deny both the fact and the conclusion which is deduced from it. The most barbarous ages cannot supply one instance of personal animosity between the Executive Officers of different nations, unless it has been founded on personal injury. If the selfish pride and passions of men have not been roused by such means, Ministers are only viewed as a part of the people whose affairs they conduct, and it is the several countries which become reciprocal objects of friendship or aversion. The

their country to gratify their desperate ambition. The constitution has survived their attacks, and they have perished in exile or upon the scaffold. Let those who imitate their example profit by the lesson of their ill success.

silence

silence of the French Executive is a conclusive proof, that upon this subject their feelings are not different from those of other Statesmen. They have not forborne through delicacy either to asperse our Government, or the conduct of our Ambassador. Is it probable that they would have shewn more respect to the Cabinet if they had been influenced by such personal antipathy. Let me ask, also, what causes can exist to excite this implacable resentment independent of a faithful attention to the interests of this country? Can that be a reason to induce the people of Great Britain to withdraw their confidence.

When the Directory talk of the corruption of English Gold and our recent endeavours to foment conspiracies among them, they laugh at the credulity of their own subjects. It is a charge brought with the same views, and founded on the same gross violation of truth as their wicked proclamations to the French people of our cruelty to prisoners. Supposing the Republic the most corrupt and impoverished nation upon earth, the whole annual supplies of England would be insufficient to effect the mischief attributed to our guineas.

Even if the Directory did feel any personal dislike to our Ministry, from whence does it appear that it would have any influence upon the conclusion

clusion of peace. If the French have taken up this dangerous system of favoritism and alliance with the administration of a country instead of its Government, they must have shewn it either in the hard terms of peace imposed upon sovereignties, whose Ministers were considered as hostile to their liberties, or in liberal concessions where they were regarded as friends. France is said to ascribe all her miseries to the treaty of Pilnitz. If this treaty did really exist, it was entered into between Prussia and the Emperor, without the concurrence or knowledge of our Cabinet*. Yet France has concluded treaties with both these Sovereigns without any change of their Ministers. If I remember rightly the Prime Minister of Naples was publicly denounced in the National Assembly as dangerous from his being an Englishman. Yet the conditions of peace granted to Naples were not so ignominious as those imposed upon Spain. On the other hand, the Directory have not abated a single jot of their most extravagant pretensions in favour of Ministers, who were professedly their friends. They have violated the neutrality, and raised contributions in Tuscany notwithstanding their veneration for the Philosophic Jacobin Carletti. They have strangled the new-born Republic of Venice, in contempt of their pious affection for

* Off. Pap. p. 34, 35.

the traitor Dandolo. Will the Republic now spare the Reverend Court of Rome from the pollution of blood, in pity to the friendship of her ambassador with Cardinal Doria Pamphili? Will she protect the ecclesiastical states from violence, the country from plunder, and the Government from annihilation, in her tender sympathy with the congenial principles of Cardinal Buon Campagna.

But I am ashamed to waste further time in refuting such an idle opinion. It is not propagated from conviction, but in the hope that it will be received without examination, into such minds as may be misled by an anxious desire of peace.

The animosity of France, is to be traced to a very different, but much more rational source. It is to be found in the designs of her rulers, and the genius of her people. The faults which characterized the nation under a Monarchy, are augmented since it has become a Republic. Frenchmen have more vanity, more confidence in their own powers, and manifest a more extravagant affectation of national superiority, than ever. Unexpected victories have made them drunk with arrogance and ambition. They aspire to the unqualified dominion of Europe, and are consoled under all their calamities, by the hopes

of attaining it. In their pursuit of liberty, they have found nothing more than the name, and they seek to mitigate the wretchedness of a military despotism, under the empty title of the Grand Nation. It is impossible not to discover in this trait, the same vain-glorious spirit, which gave to their sovereign, in the last century, his appellation of the Grand Monarque ; the same insulence of ambition, which at that time roused all Europe, with England at its head, to chastise and repress it.

The various swarms of domestic tyrants, which have infested France ever since the Revolution, have fed and fastened upon this weakness of their countrymen, with instinctive consistency. The same principles which prescribed the Rhine and Alps, as the natural boundaries of France in the National Convention, dictate a general plan of subjugation to the present directory. They are not merely stimulated to attempt it, by the insatiable appetite for conquest, and the imperious necessity for plunder. They urge it in their eager solicitude for life, as the indispensable stay of their domestic Government, and the only means to insure their personal safety. The popularity of conquest, and the dread of the army, are the great causes of tranquillity in France. Peace, in removing the terror of coercion and a common object of desire from this restless and volatile people,

people, would give rise to civil disturbances infinitely more destructive than a foreign war.

While the French Republic pursue the same plan that has been followed by every other powerful Republic, and aim at foreign conquests to preserve domestic tranquility, they are prompted by many reasons to direct their attack against Great Britain. Our great wealth encourages their Government with the hope of recruiting their resources; and our solicitude for peace has taught them to despise our military spirit. Regarding us as the natural guardians of the balance of Europe, they do not consider their present conquests as safe, unless they can ruin our commerce, and break to pieces our spirit and our pride. They are certain, that until they have effected it, they can neither destroy the peace of Northern Europe, nor disturb the tranquility of America.

To the powerful motives of political interest, we must add the inflamed and rancorous enmity of an unsuccessful rival. While they have been victorious over all their other enemies, they have been foiled and disgraced in every conflict with the forces of this country. They have stood forth the emulous competitors of all our pursuits, and have proved unsuccessful in all. It was the favorite object of their Government, ever since

the time of Colbert, to cherish commerce and manufactures in the country. Both have been utterly ruined by the revolution, while ours have increased in a double proportion to that of their loss. They have struggled with us for the dominion of the ocean; and the strength and glory of our Navy, is increased by the annihilation and disgrace of their fleets. But, above all, they have aspired to excel the parent of our industry, of our wealth, of our civil liberty, and of our general pre-eminence in Europe. Writhing under the painful consequences of their intemperate zeal for freedom, they behold the serene aspect of this country with frantic jealousy, and madly attempt to destroy by treachery and force, a Constitution, whose blessings they are unable to attain.

These are the true causes of their animosity against us, as they appear in the manifestos of the Government, and the addresses of the people. They do not complain of the English Ministry, but of the English Government; of English perfidy; of English interference on the Continent; of the boundless extent of English commerce, and of the despotic dominion of the English over the seas. It is the destruction of these monuments of our glory, and instruments of our prosperity, which constitute the avowed objects

objects of the war.* Worked up, and stung into madness, they vaunt of overcoming the very elements in their means to subdue us.

While the Republic is influenced by projects and passions, such as I have described, it will be vain to hope for peace upon moderate terms, and it would be madness to conclude it upon such as must confess our inferiority and defeat.

When the New Whigs counsel their country to submit to peace upon any terms, their advice is as pernicious to our immediate safety, as it is derogatory to our honour.† We are advanced to
a pitch

* The public may consult among other abominable manifestos, employed to influence the minds of the French people against us, an address to the Ministers for foreign relations, which is the term in their new jargon for ambassadors by Citizen Talleyrand, the ci-devant "Holy Prelate of Autun."

† If the advice is good, and suited to the digestion of a British stomach, it shall not be lost to the nation through any fault of mine. I will therefore give the opinion of a noble author in his own words, respecting the situation of his country, and the terms upon which he wishes to conclude a peace. "To me it appears
" in the strongest manner, that the difficulty of making peace
" rests not so much with our enemy, as with ourselves We must
" ultimately break down the temper of our minds to the real
" nature of our situation. We must turn to look, not at the
" proud state of the country, when Mr. Pitt involved us in this
" unfortunate contest; but at the state to which he has now
" reduced us. For his misconduct, waste and incapacity, we
" must now, however unwillingly prepare to pay, not in our
" past

a pitch of power and prosperity, from which we never can recede with safety. We must maintain the glorious eminence in which we are placed with that sword which won it. If we retire puffillanimously, we shall be attacked as an object of plunder for our riches, and of jealousy for the remnants of our power. The prime cause of the grandeur of Rome, is to be found in her invariable resolution, never to conclude a disadvantageous peace. She nobly adhered to this determination under difficulties infinitely greater than any that surround this country at present. But Mr. Sheridan calls any reference to the practice and opinions of ancient nations, a sort of school-boy politics. The experience of history, which is the light of human wisdom, is thus extinguished by a compendious sentence. Those accounts of the great and polished people of antiquity, in which Montesquieu discovered the grounds and the proofs of his political reflections; that study from whence the sharp-sighted Machiavel extracted all his remarks,

"past and former burthens, however heavy they may be, but in
 "our national importance, and national consideration. We may
 "look at the rank we held in the scale of Europe with regret;
 "but we must prepare to stand in the station to which he has
 "reduced us, if not with satisfaction, at least with patience."

Earl of Lauderdale's Letter on the present measures of finance,
 p. 11. The passage is above all comment. It is well worthy the perusal of every man who wishes well to his country, and yet desires a change in administration.

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are despised and put down from the view of our self-taught politicians. It is impossible not to feel our indignation swell at such rash and ignorant presumption !

These considerate and modest statesmen, however, will find the history of modern times, not less fruitful in examples of the fatal consequences of a too strong attachment to peace than that of antiquity. There is not a single instance, among the vast vicissitudes of fortune experienced throughout the territories of modern Europe, where a state which has sunk under a sense of her own inferiority, and ignominiously thrown down her arms, has not ultimately suffered more than she could have done from the continuance of a fierce and bloody war.

Struck with a sense of such dangers, the legislators and sages of antiquity, laboured with peculiar anxiety to impress upon the hearts of the people an ardent love for the Military success and glory of their country. They did not wickedly encourage it from a vain principle of ambition, but wisely from a firm conviction, that it constitutes the only means to secure independence and respect. When the high sense of national honour which cannot brook defeat, is once destroyed and rooted out by luxury and avarice, that spirit is departed which gave life and

and energy to the people. The rest is little else than a putrid mass, infecting the soil upon which it lies. The Empire of the East, Venice, Spain and more recently Holland, illustrate and confirm this opinion by the history of their decline.

When a country has heaped its couch so high with softness, as to shudder at the rigid deeds of war, it will soon lose those effeminate comforts which have caused its emasculation. Its wealth becomes a lure, held out for its more warlike neighbours to stoop at, and it must yield a fat and easy prey to those who attack it. Even when suffered to remain in peace under the protection of some more powerful ally, it gradually sinks down into lethargic indolence. The transition is rapid from an active generous state of emulation, which spurs on the human mind to put its energies in competition with, and to excel its neighbours in deeds of prowess and noble attainment, to one of listless selfishness, when the people are voluptuous, profligate, inert and factious.

*Nunc patimur longæ pacis mala : sævior armis
Luxuria incubuit, victumque ulciscitur orbem.*

God forbid, that our country, with the example of Holland before its eyes, should sink thus patiently under the weight of its own prosperity. The first symptom of our decline will

will be manifested in a readiness to submit to unequal conditions as the price, and for the sake of peace. In doing so, we teach our enemies that perseverance is the grand secret to humble and subdue us.

If we should once fall, we cannot even hope to keep floating on the surface, buoyed up by the jealousy of superior powers, as the Dutch have done till their late subjugation by France. The balance of Europe which preserved declining and decrepid nations from destruction, is, at present, entirely overthrown. Even supposing it should be restored, yet the fate of Antwerp may teach us what consequences ensue to a nation which allows a dangerous rival to break the heart-strings of its prosperity. Reposing upon the stability of our government and the security of our laws, the subjects of every prince and state where the British name is known, have been eager to invest their property in our national funds. That wealth which has flowed into Great Britain, from the rank she has held among nations, will pass from her with the loss of national estimation. Foreigners will no longer trust us with their property, which, though we have the means, we want the courage to defend.

Indeed, my dear Sir, that country does not exist, which has more occasion than our own to reflect

reflect deeply upon the maxim of the most profound politician among the ancient historians.* He has observed, that a just and honourable peace is the most fair and useful blessing which a Nation can possess; but when it is founded upon terms of servile inequality and submission, it is of all things the most disgraceful and pernicious.

Upon what ground do the New Whigs found their exhortations to sacrifice our reputation and endanger our safety by making an unequal peace? Is it from the dread of an invasion? The very women of Athens, in the zeal of patriotism, destroyed the family of him, who offered similar advice from a similar motive. Armed and prepared as this country is, what has she to fear from such an event? If, regardless of domestic divisions, the people unite as they have always done to repel the attacks of a foreign enemy, the de-

* The reflection is in Polybius, Lib. 4, Hist. Sec. 37.

Εἰρηὴ γὰρ μετὰ τοῖς τε Ἀρκασὶ καὶ Περίοροις, καλλίστη ἐστὶ κτήνη καὶ λαισιπλέστον μετὰ δὲ κακίαν ἱπποκρίτου πάντων ἀνέχεται καὶ βλαβερώτατον. This judicious historian is remarking upon the ill conduct of the Massenians in observing a strict neutrality between the Arcadians and Lacedæmonians. Having remained at peace while the Arcadians, who were their friends and allies, were contending with the Lacedæmonians, who were their implacable enemies, they were immediately attacked after the defeat of the former, and reduced to subjection.

feat of these invaders is certain and will form the surest means to facilitate peace.

Do the New Whigs urge it from the hope that we may repair the losses of war, by our industrious accumulations in peace? Looking at what has taken place, they will find that our commerce has always risen most rapidly after the conclusion of a successful war. The admiration of our courage, and the opinion of our strength opened the markets of Europe to our merchants, after the peace of Utrecht and that of 1763. If France should now rise upon our ruins, she may shut the ports of the world against us, and accomplish, by negotiation, what she vainly attempts by force. Allowing the possibility of our emerging again, by such means, from that inferior station which Lord Lauderdale and his friends advise us quietly and patiently to take in the scale of nations, is it credible that France, jealous of our commerce, and eager for war and plunder, would suffer us to creep back again into power? The very purchase of peace would invite the renewal of hostilities, while we have any colonies, commerce, or wealth remaining. Neither inoffensive conduct, nor patience, nor submission on our parts, could preserve us from insult and oppression. The grounds of attack upon the Venetian States, not to mention Switzerland, and the late cruel and cowardly conduct towards
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the Pope, may shew those who need the lesson, that France can never want a pretext for commencing hostilities.

It is urged, however, that the heavy burdens which are imposed upon the country are decisive and insuperable objections to a continuance of the war. Undoubtedly they are heavy. But ought they to appear so very grievous, when it is considered, that they are imposed to repel injury, disgrace and ruin from the Empire. In no period of our prosperity has our opulence been so immense as it is at this very time. Notwithstanding the taxes which have been imposed, I state it broadly, and challenge contradiction, there does not exist one state or district in Europe, where the inhabitants enjoy, so universally, all the comforts and conveniencies, which riches and freedom can bestow, as they now do in Great Britain, during the calamities of war. It is to ensure a continuance of those blessings to the rich and to the poor, that the higher ranks are called upon to contribute a portion of their means.

The spirit and liberality of the nation cannot be roused to a more glorious purpose than to protect the main sources of our prosperity. Let them remember that it is for the safety of all our invaluable colonies in the East, and in the West; for the employment of our manufacturers

facturers at home; for the continuance of our commercial relations abroad; and above all, for the security of our domestic freedom, and the untarnished honor of the empire. When we call to mind what other nations, what we ourselves, what France, has endured, for much inferior objects, ought we to refuse to bear, or repine at burthens which leave us a greater portion of all the comforts and elegant conveniencies of life, than our ancestors had ever enjoyed.

There is no alternative for this country, but immediate destruction, or a manly resistance. The French Republic openly avow their intention to exact retribution for our former glory, for our present prosperity, and for the humiliation of France, ever since the peace of Ryswick.* They have entered other countries with declarations of friendship, and the piercing cries of the plundered inhabitants have re-echoed throughout Europe. Do her menaces found in our infatuated ears as pledges of peculiar tenderness and moderation to us? What treatment are we to expect from that enemy, when victorious, who prefers the chances of war to all reasonable proposals of peace? What mercy could this nation hope for, if conquered,

* Address of Citizen Talleyrand, already noticed.

when common prudence cannot keep back the eager animosity of that Republic, from the vain satisfaction of idle and empty threats against her.

We have made it fully evident, that we are desirous of peace on terms scarcely compatible with our future security. But when the Directory go further, and require from us what amounts to unconditional submission, can an Englishman hesitate upon the path he is to take? The merchant, counting upon the sober round of immediate loss and profit, must perceive the certainty of ruin on the one hand, and the chance, at least, of a successful struggle on the other. But he who contrasts the situation of his country with the fate of other kingdoms; he who has anxiously scrutinized the sources of their elevation, and the causes of their decline; must feel the certain conviction, that once to admit the principle is to destroy the energy of the nation, the stability of the empire, and the happiness of posterity.

33 If the people at home have caught one spark of emulous valour from the glories of their navy, they cannot submit thus tamely to disgrace and destruction. They will never lie cowering, like a timorous plump of sea-fowl, fearfully and passively expecting upon whom the pounces of this hawk is to fasten. They will not obscure and deface the well-earned glory of those illustrious

trious heroes who have swept the combined fleets of France, of Spain, of Holland from the seas. If, through our cowardice, those brave sailors, who died to confirm our triumphs, have expired in vain, their blood is laid upon our heads.

Looking at the past struggles of this country, and the recent events of the war, are we not compell'd to ask what it is that has happened, which can justify a great and valiant people, in yielding to despair? In every contest, in which our single strength has been opposed to that of the Republic, we have proved victorious. Our navy keeps every one of our enemies bound in chains upon their own coasts. Our army is inspired with a noble emulation to rival the example they have received from our marine.

Are we to suffer the wicked and interested statements of the New Whigs, to depress our spirits in contradiction to our feelings and our reason? Let us look to their new and desperate coalition with the Corresponding Society for evidence of their motives and their views. It is not that society which has changed its principles. It is the Opposition who are determined to destroy the country, or force their passage to the Cabinet. Their convivial meetings

are formed into Schools of Republicanism and Sedition. Their toasts, their songs, their sentiments, breath the same contempt for the out-lines of the Constitution, the same disrespect for the person of their Sovereign, the same adoration of pure Democracy, and the same fealty to the French Republic, that distinguished the Revolution and Corresponding Societies.

Most assuredly, our situation is not destitute of danger, when the efforts of the country are opposed and thwarted by such men. Neither is it to be concealed that we can not hope for success against our natural enemy without considerable self-denial on the part of the rich. But what country has purchased glory and advantage at an inferior price. When we fight for our domestic liberties, for our foreign independence, and for our commercial rights; when we rise up to protect Europe from anarchy, barbarism and final subjugation, the object is worthy of the effort, and the result is in the hands of God. If we fall in such a contest, we fall as becomes a noble people, leaving an example to our posterity, which may excite them to avenge us.

I know, my dear friend, you agree with me, in thinking that there is but little probability of such a melancholy event. Alone and unassisted, our native strength is more than sufficient to ensure

sure us final success. But courage and magnanimity have never failed to procure allies. A very short resistance must rally Europe round our standard. Those powers, which are still independent, cannot long endure the contemptuous violation of their rights, the restless spirit, the overbearing haughtiness, and the ambitious plans of the French Republic. Her enormous exactions from her allies, and her newly acquired dominions have sown the seeds of resistance, discontent and insurrection. It does not require much sagacity to foresee that a storm is now gathering, which must ultimately burst upon her.

I am, &c.